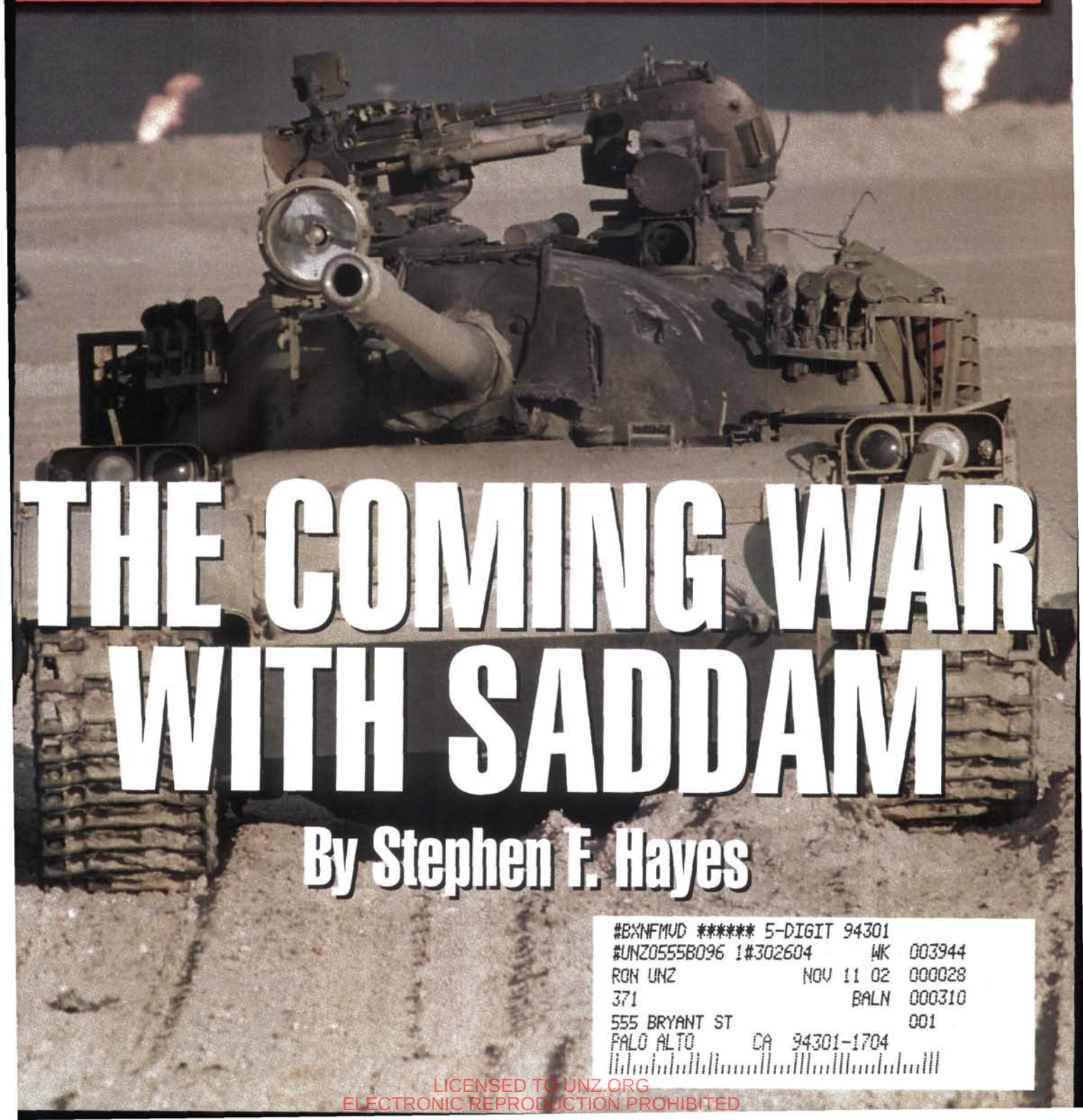
the weekly
Standard

JULY 29, 2002 $3.95

BOWDLERIZING 'LITTLE WOMEN'
JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN



THE COMING WAR WITH SADDAM

By Stephen F. Hayes

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Since the days of Hippocrates, physicians have been guided by the words, "First do no harm." Medical progress and scientific innovation during these centuries have provided doctors with ever-improving tools to help and heal patients.

We are living in a time of phenomenal scientific discovery. Tomorrow's physicians will have new and better tools to diagnose, treat and hopefully, prevent disease.

Americans are counting on the nation to foster and encourage medical progress. They are proud of their country, which leads the world in excellence in healthcare.

Unfortunately, one of the risks Americans currently face is an effort to upset the balance between incentives for discovery of new medicines and the expedited availability of generic drugs. In an attempt to address affordability, several legislative proposals have been introduced including those sponsored by Senators Schumer (D-NY) and McCain (R-AZ) as well as Representative Brown (D-OH) and Emerson (R-MO). This legislation would undermine pharmaceutical patent protection and other innovation incentives.

We rely on pharmaceutical treatments to improve the lives of patients. It is in our best interest to create every incentive for pharmaceutical researchers to continue their work. For their work is not easy. One new drug takes 12 to 17 years and $800 million to bring to market. Only 1 in 5,000 compounds ever makes it from the laboratory to the pharmacy shelf. Without protections, this work will not continue.

America's patients depend on us to be there for them now and in the future. Please oppose the McCain-Schumer and Emerson-Brown bills and any other legislation that would harm pharmaceutical innovation.

Signed By:

Dr. Stephen Ayres, Dean Emeritus
School of Medicine
Medical College of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University

Mauro Ferrari, Ph.D.
Associate VP, Health Sciences
Technology and Commercialization
The Ohio State University

Frank Zemlan, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Phase 2 Discovery, Inc.
Cinncinnati, OH

Dr. Stephen Long
Physician
Commonwealth Pain Specialists
Richmond, VA

Stephen Howell
Director, Bio Sciences Institute
Iowa State University

Dr. Stephen Rayport, MD Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychiatry in the
Center for Neurobiology & Behavior,
Columbia University

Jacob Maczuga
Executive Vice President
Science and Technology Campus
Corporation (at Ohio State University)

Dr. Andrew Harris
Physician, Johns Hopkins Hospital
and Maryland State Senator

Dr. Allan Goldstein
Physician
Pulmonary Associates of the Southeast
Birmingham, AL

Jason Louie
Patent Attorney
Law Offices of Jason Louie
San Francisco, CA

Dr. Robert Fierro
the GYN Center LLC
Richmond, VA

Dr. Robert Cordell
Professor Emeritus
Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

Dr. John Hammon
Professor
Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

Ronald Maddox, Pharm. D.
Dean
Campbell University
School of Pharmacy

Thomas Holmes, Jr., Ph.D.
Associate Dean
Campbell University
School of Pharmacy

Dr. William Zitzman
President Elect
Maryland Society of
Anesthesiologists

Dr. Robert Riley
Assistant Professor
Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

Linda Becnel
Lecturer, and Media Figure
President, Becnel & Associates
San Francisco, CA

Dr. Kenneth Cowens, MD
Youngstown, OH

Dr. Hayes Wilson
Chief of Rheumatology
Piedmont Hospital
Atlanta, GA

Dr. Billy Mink
Physician
The Children's Clinic
Jackson, MS

Alan Hoffman, Ph.D.
Professor
Bentley College
Waltham, MA

Sally Huntoon Vitali
Fellow, Pediatric Care
Children's Hospital of Boston
(at Harvard University)

James Poulos
Executive Director
Office of Technology Commercialization
University of Maryland

James R. Bloedel
Vice Provost of Research
Iowa State University

Vicki Groce
Missouri State Advisory Council
for Emergency Medical Services

Bradley S. Sloan, D.O.
Capitol Region Medical Center
University of Missouri Health System

Lee Heiman, Esq.
Patent Attorney
Nath & Associates, PLLC
Washington, DC

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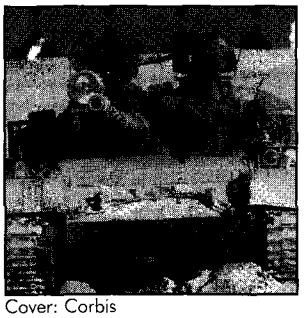

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the weekly Standard

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Who Is Syed Athar Abbas?

THE SCRAPBOOK's colleague David Tell raised this interesting question last week in an online piece for THE DAILY STANDARD, discussing developments in the anthrax investigation.

As was reported by *Newsday*'s Rocco Parascandola on July 15, Abbas is a Pakistani national formerly of Fort Lee, N.J., who scammed more than $100,000 from a couple of banks last summer in a check-kiting scheme. According to Parascandola's report, "less than a week after the World Trade Center was attacked, the FBI came looking for Abbas and his friends, only to learn from the landlord that they had disappeared a month earlier." And what had they spent their money on? A sophisticated food-mixing machine, the whereabouts of which are still unknown.

Abbas in June signed a plea agreement admitting guilt in the bank fraud. But according to Parascandola's police sources, he hasn't given up the names of his associates or told authorities where the mixing machine is. Which of course raises the question of what precisely they wanted to mix.

As Tell noted, "The $100,000 particulate mixer Parascandola describes . . . is the exact same technology commonly employed by major food and pharmaceutical manufacturers to process fluid-form organic and inorganic compounds into powder: first to dry those compounds; next to grind the resulting mixture into tiny specks of dust, as small as a single micron in diameter; then to coat those dust specks with a chemical additive, if necessary, to maximize their motility or 'floatiness'; and finally to aerate the stuff for end-use packaging. In other words, this is how you'd put Aunt Jemima pancake mix in its box. Or place concentrations of individual anthrax spores into letters addressed to Senators Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. . . ."

Let's be clear: There's no evidence linking Abbas to the anthrax attacks. But one does wish that Abbas had been compelled to disclose the location of the mixing machine as part of his plea agreement.

As things stand, he has promised restitution to the banks, will serve a few months in jail, and then probably will be deported. Meanwhile, the anthrax investigation remains focused on individuals fitting the FBI's profile of an American loner with access to labs and a scientific background. ♦

The See-No-Evil Middle East Experts

Joel Beinin, a professor of Middle East history at Stanford and president of the Middle East Studies Association, last week circulated an e-mail to "friends and colleagues" urging them to mount a PR campaign on behalf of the association.

"You are probably aware," Beinin wrote, "that the public attack on American Middle East studies and MESA in particular that began with the publication of Martin Kramer's *Ivory Towers on Sand* has continued throughout the year in the mass media with articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New Republic*, the *National Review*, the *New York Post*, and many other places as well as articles and radio shows by one Stanley Kurtz (a fellow at the Hoover Institution located uncomfortably close to my office).

"While the intellectual criticisms of MESA members are mostly mean spirited, ad hominem, and spurious, there is a significant threat to Middle East studies from this assault. Many of the individuals associated with it (Kramer, Kurtz, and Daniel Pipes most prominently) are explicitly calling on Congress to defund Title VI Middle East Centers and to put federal money into building more reliably 'patriotic' sources of Middle East expertise. In practice, it would be difficult if not impossible to do this without relying substantially on individuals and institutions already in place. Nonetheless, in the xenophobic current atmosphere of the United States, we would be seriously remiss if we failed to make a public case for the value of our scholarly enterprise not only for its own sake, but also for the public goods it provides to American society at large."

Let's unpack the slanders here. First, no one has cause to be made uncomfortable by the proximity of Stanley Kurtz, a distinguished contributor to these pages, a scholar, and a gentleman. Indeed, when it comes to writerly combat, Kurtz may be one of the last intellectuals in America to fight by Marquis of Queensberry rules. Second, far from being mean spirited, ad hominem, and spurious, the critique of MESA, both in Kramer's book and in the journalism it inspired, has been a model of public-spirited concern. The "public goods" provided to American society at large by Beinin and his MESA cohorts are in fact a "bill of goods."

The September 11 attacks revealed that the vaunted "expertise" of the MESA establishment was no such thing. Theirs is a tendentious, ideologically driven lefty academic enterprise. In Kurtz's unsparing phrase, an "intellectual failure." Kurtz summarized Kramer's findings in these pages last November ("The Scandal of Middle East Studies," November 19, 2001):

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Throughout the 1990s, American academics simply refused to study Islamic terrorism. Instead, they searched in vain for a Muslim "Martin Luther," some thinker who might reinterpret the Islamic tradition so as to adapt it to democracy. Osama bin Laden could only be an embarrassment to scholars who saw political Islam as benign. To this day, American scholars have produced not a single serious study of bin Laden, his ideology, or his influence. Six months before September 11, Sarah Lawrence professor Fawaz Gerges, whose work drew on [past MESA president John] Esposito's paradigm, asked: "Should not observers and academics keep skeptical about the U.S. government's assessment of the terrorist threat? To what extent do terrorist 'experts' indirectly perpetuate this irrational fear of terrorism by focusing too much on far-fetched horrible scenarios?"

This question has received its condign rejoinder in the works of Kramer, Kurtz, and Pipes. They ask, in effect: Should not the U.S. government "keep skeptical" about MESA's assessment of the terrorist threat? To what extent did academic Middle East "experts" indirectly contribute to our unpreparedness for bin Laden by focusing too little on horrible scenarios that, alas, were not at all far-fetched?

So how does Beinin think MESA should answer this critique? Apparently by caricaturing it: "We should actively advocate the idea that lively discussion of Middle Eastern affairs, not slavish parroting of whatever pronouncements come from Washington policy makers, is the best way to promote good public policy and an informed citizenry."

Revealingly, Beinin's first two suggestions of specific outlets for MESA's new PR offensive are the lefty outfits AlterNet and Pacific News Service. The case for defunding only gets stronger. ♦

Czech, Please

In a recent interview with a German newspaper, former tennis champ and star of Subaru Forester commercials Martina Navratilova described her mixed feelings about living in America (she defected from Czechoslovakia in 1975): "The most absurd thing is that, in fleeing from injustice, I only exchanged one system that suppressed freedom of opinion for another," she told *Die Zeit*. "The Republicans in the U.S. manipulate public opinion and sweep controversial issues under the table. It's depressing."

THE SCRAPBOOK tried to build up a head of steam over this, but we couldn't keep up with the outrage of CNN's Connie Chung, who told the ex-Czech winner of 18 Grand Slam titles that she found these statements "un-American, unpatriotic. I wanted to say, go back to Czechoslovakia, you know, if you don't like it here, this a country that gave you so much, gave you the freedom to do what you want." Navratilova returned serve: "When you say go back to the Czech Republic, why are you sending me back there? I live here. I love this country. I've lived here 27 years. I've paid taxes here for 27 years. Do I not have a right to speak out? Why is that unpatriotic?"

Chung's volley: "Well, you know the old line, love it or leave it." ♦

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Casual

A Cheap Night Out

A warm Monday night in Chicago, and I'm feeling flush and contented, departing a parking lot with my wife, beginning our walk to the Emperor's Choice, our favorite Chinese restaurant on Wentworth Avenue. A guy in his early thirties, in jeans, a well-worn cambray work shirt, and a white hard hat, with a phone in his hand, asks, "Do you speak English?" When I tell him that I have been known to do so, he begins a long and detailed story, which I shall provide here in a much-shortened version.

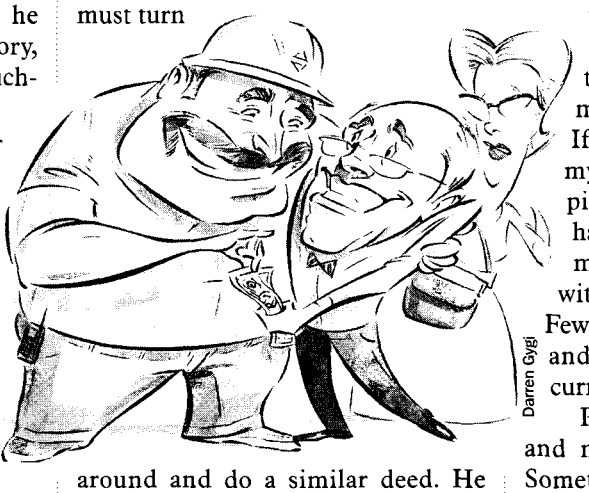
He works for his father's construction company—the name is beautifully vague, like Acme or Delta Development—and he's been driving one of the company trucks, which is stalled nearby. The towing company won't take a credit card, but insists on cash, and he is twenty-seven dollars short of the sum required. Could I help him out? He promises that "Nancy," in the office, will cut me a check for the sum in the morning.

"If you are conning me," I say, "at my age I shall have to repair to the Gobi Desert, to live out my days as a hermit, forever disappointed in humankind. You wouldn't do that to an older gent, would you?"

He shows me his hands, palms turned outward, which are calloused, a cut on the left one. He offers to get someone on his phone for me to prove his bona fides. I shake him off. How much does he need? He says, eyes looking down at the pavement, the whole twenty-seven bucks. The towing company won't do business with him for less.

What the hell? Why not? I take my money clip out of my pants pocket and realize I have only twenties. If I am going to trust him for $27, why not trust him for $40? Between a twenty-seven-dollar fool and a forty-dollar fool, there is only a thirteen-dollar difference. I peel off two twenties and hand them to him. He exudes a look of extreme gratitude, says thank you, hugs my wife lightly, then hugs me.

"Did you ever see the movie *Pay It Forward*?" he asks. We haven't. He explains that in it when a person has been the recipient of a good deed, he must turn around and do a similar deed. He wants us to know that he will not forget to do so.



Darren Gygi

"Please," he says, "write down your name and address, so that I know where to have the check sent." After I do so, he asks if I would mind also writing down our phone number, so that he can have his wife call up to thank us. He wants to know what's the latest he can have her call. He shakes hands with me, and smiles. I note he seems to be missing the back teeth on the upper right side. Not a good sign, I fleetingly think.

"Thanks again," he says, "I won't forget this." And, clapping his hard hat on his head, he walks off briskly in the direction of the nearby Dan Ryan Expressway.

Surprise: His wife didn't call that evening, nor did he the day after. Now, nearly five weeks later, "Nancy" seems to have forgotten to mail the check. I have, indubitably, been conned and taken, shaken and nicely baked.

I choose, however, not to go to the Gobi Desert. For some reason, I am not as depressed about this as perhaps I ought to be. Why, I ask myself, don't I feel, in the language of my people, more of a *schmuck* than I do? Part of me admires the sheer style with which I have been taken; it entailed, after all, costuming: that hard hat, the phone, the calloused hands, the whole bit. Bringing up the movie *Pay It Forward* was a fine touch; so was the request for our phone number and the nicety of asking what was the latest that his wife could call. Our man, it suggested, was well brought up.

Forty dollars is a little more than the cost of my wife's and my Chinese dinner that evening. If the money had slipped out of my pocket, or if I had even been pickpocketed, I think I would have felt more aggrieved. Instead my wife and I were presented with a show of fairly high quality. Fewer than eighty bucks for dinner and a night's entertainment—by current standards, not all that bad.

Panhandling is becoming more and more widespread in America. Sometimes it can be menacing. Not long ago I was stopped in a supermarket parking lot by a guy with what I believe are known as felony muscles, who told me he had just got out of jail and could I let him have a buck? I forked it over without hesitation. Sometimes it can be truly affecting: men horribly crippled in motorized chairs selling newspapers for the homeless. But for the most part I shell out my dollar or two only for the really impressive and well-made cock-and-bull stories, extravagant tales of sadness recounted with flair.

"You know," I remember my father saying, "it doesn't hurt to get conned every once in a while. Keeps you sharp. Reminds you of your own fallibility." He was no dope, my father.

Joseph Epstein

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ABILITIES UNLIMITED

Cars are Willie Jones' profession and passion. He works for General Motors (GM) and restores vintage automobiles in his spare time. But he doesn't drive. He has been blind since birth.

A GM employee for the past 17 years, Mr. Jones works as a technical liaison with dealerships nationwide, making sure they get the information they need to repair customers' cars and trucks. He uses a personal computer equipped with a screen reader and voice synthesizer to search for engineering solutions in GM's in-house knowledge base. Technology helps him create documents, send and receive e-mail, browse the Web and do everything else his job requires.

Today, technology is increasingly accessible because of special tools and innovative features, such as high-contrast color schemes that make computer screens more readable. As a result, millions of people with disabilities can now pursue diverse careers and participate fully in their communities. But that's not all: Accessible technology also helps businesses succeed.

For business success, remove workplace barriers.

Top companies use accessible technology to retain valued employees and to recruit from a wider pool of talented candidates. To see why, consider the following numbers.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 54 million Americans have some kind of permanent disability that makes it difficult for them to perform one or more everyday activities. This is nearly one in five Americans, an enormous resource of talent and expertise that employers cannot afford to overlook.

In addition, every year millions of workers suffer an injury or illness that causes a temporary impairment. Technology enables many of these people to continue at their jobs, allowing employers to avoid the cost and disruption of finding and training others.

And the workforce in industrialized countries is graying. By the year 2008, one in six American workers will be 55 or older. Gradual loss of some vision, hearing and dexterity is a natural part of aging that will make the value of accessible technology increasingly significant for people and businesses.

Glenn Higgins has been quadriplegic since he was 17, when he was injured in a wrestling accident. Today, 36 years later, he holds a Ph.D. in neuropsychology and serves as vice president and medical director for UnumProvident, a $9.4-billion provider of disability insurance.

Dr. Higgins succeeds in his high-level job through a combination of talent, hard work and technology. His tools include a personal computer equipped with speech recognition software and a puff-stick, which resembles a drinking straw but operates like a mouse when he "puffs" on it with his mouth. Aided by technology, Dr. Higgins spends his days like any other busy executive in his field—meeting with clients, reviewing files and writing reports.

With people like Glenn Higgins and Willie Jones in mind, Microsoft works to extend the accessibility of each new version of Windows, Microsoft Office and other key software products. Our researchers seek to perfect computerized speech recognition and text-to-speech synthesis. We collaborate with other industry leaders to develop new technologies for people with disabilities. And we have published a new book, *Accessible Technology in Today's Business*, with case studies and practical tools to help organizations knock down barriers and empower their employees.

We foresee a day when technology will help overcome all barriers caused by disabilities and the limitations of age. And that will make life better for everyone.

One in a series of essays on technology and society. More information is available at microsoft.com/issues.

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Sacred Secrets

In "Spies Like Us" (July 1/July 8), Harvey Klehr praises our book for being "filled with fascinating and important new data about Soviet espionage and some Americans who were engaged in it." He concedes that this new source material creates a new view of intelligence history. We are glad that he enjoyed reading *Sacred Secrets* and hope readers of The Weekly Standard will follow his lead.

Yet Klehr cannot adjust his academic focus to accept revelations by "confidential sources whose motivations and reliability are unknown." Having coauthored an excellent book with John Haynes on Venona, he is aware that sources for Soviet archival material must often be protected.

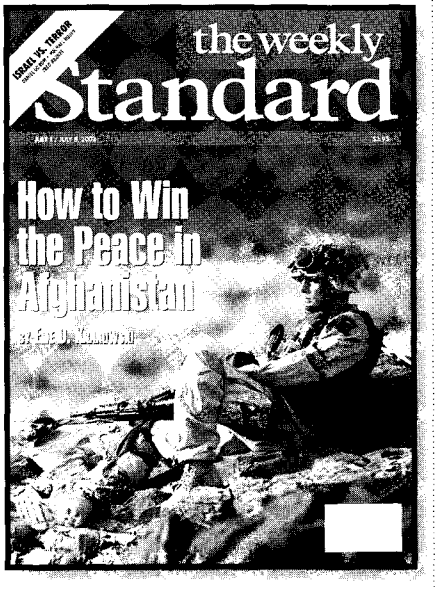
Indeed, Klehr appears to have difficulty absorbing the evidence of what he did not know before. Even a NSA historian we interviewed admitted that the NSA had no proof that Truman did not know about Venona, they merely assumed it because they found no paper trail showing that Truman knew. The Truman Library's presidential appointment records demonstrate that on June 4, 1945, Brigadier General Carter Clarke briefed President Truman on the program underway to break the Soviet codes. Oliver Kirby, who worked for Clarke and was in charge of breaking the Russian codes, attests to Truman's knowledge of Venona.

Similarly, Klehr contradicts himself when he fails to read the connection between Elizabeth Zarubina, deputy chief of Soviet intelligence in North and South America, and her protégé Kitty Harris, who was sent to reactivate two illegals close to Robert Oppenheimer. In his nitpicking to "dilute one's confidence in the authors' command of the material," Klehr exposes his own lack of understanding of FBI methods. He argues that we confused the bugging of Steve Nelson's apartment with a telephone tap. The FBI was doing both, we learned from Robert Lamphere and other FBI agents.

Jerrold and Leona Schecter
Washington, DC

Harvey Klehr responds: The Schecters do not refute any of the criticisms I offered. Steve Nelson's home may well have been bugged and his telephone tapped, but his conversation with Zarubina was in his house, not on the telephone, and their book gives both stories. The relation between Elizabeth Zarubina and Kitty Harris is irrelevant to the Schecters' confusion over whether it was Kheifitz or another Soviet operative who introduced Zarubina to the Oppenheimer family.

As for Harry Truman's knowledge of Venona, the Truman Library can find no indication of what Carter Clarke told the president at his June 4, 1945, meeting. It could not have been about the code names of suspected spies because, as the National Security Agency has noted, not



until July 1946 did Meredith Gardener begin to read KGB messages.

Dissent from *Dissent*

In addition to an impressive amount of distortion, misinterpretation, and factual error, Stephen Schwartz commits a serious slander in his review of Susan Weissman's biography of the novelist Victor Serge ("Telling Socialism's Story," July 1/July 8). He repeats, following Weissman, that while living in Paris the poetess Marina Tsvetayeva was an agent of the NKVD. Now it is one thing to invent, as Schwartz likes to, exciting scenarios whereby leftist luminaries were murdered; it is quite another to implicate a long-suffering poet in such activities. Tsvetayeva's husband Sergei Efron was indeed an agent who organized at least one assassination, but there has never been any suggestion that Tsvetayeva actually participated.

Keith Gessen
Syracuse, NY

Not content to comment on Susan Weissman's biography of Victor Serge, Stephen Schwartz feels compelled to slander *Dissent* magazine. He describes a recent *Dissent* review by Keith Gessen as a "hatchet-job," performed in order "to undermine Serge by sabotaging Weissman's biography and obscuring the real evils of Moscow's secret police and the anger of Serge's reaction to them." Schwartz implies that *Dissent*, which he nastily describes as an "organ of the recusant anti-anti-Communist school of Irving Howe," promotes Stalinist apologetics.

Anyone who has read *Dissent* or knows anything about its history will know how absurd this is. Schwartz's real problem is revealed when he says that Serge "belonged to the group perhaps best described as 'anticipatory neoconservatives.'" Intellectual history is more complicated than this. The notion that there is a straight line connecting courageous intellectual dissidents of the 1940s and the perspective of The Weekly Standard may be comforting. But it is juvenile.

Jeffrey C. Isaac
Editorial Board, Dissent
Bloomington, IN

Stephen Schwartz responds: Keith Gessen is far behind the curve on Tsvetayeva. In 1989, I coauthored an article in the journal *Arguments and Facts International* that described the discovery of the transcript of Tsvetayeva's interrogation by the French police after the flight of her NKVD-agent husband Sergei Efron. I and others have concluded from this document that Tsvetayeva was a knowing participant in her husband's activities. In addition, considerable archival material has been published in Russia on the Tsvetayeva-Efron ménage, much of which confirms her involvement. This judgment merely rati-

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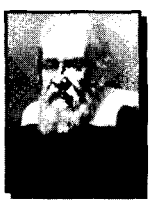
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fies the belief held at the time by no less a figure than Vladimir Nabokov. As for Jeffrey Isaac's comment: I have known for quite a while that dissenting from *Dissent* is asking for trouble. But I'm grateful for the reminder.

Paradise Regained

Eric Cohen points out some tensions—though not actual contradictions—in pro-biotechnology arguments ("Biotech Loses Its Innocence," June 24). He notes that biotech defenders claim the benefits of therapeutic cell-cloning are imminent while the possible horrors of radically altering the human gene code (or "eugenics," as Cohen puts it) remain far off. This is no rhetorical ploy on the part of scientists but an accurate summary of the state of research. We are far from understanding what trait is caused by each component of the human genome, but experiments in the replacement of diseased cells with newly cloned ones are well underway in animals and may soon help humans.

Surely one could play Cohen's game with anti-biotech arguments, pointing out seeming contradictions in order to cast aspersions on the whole movement. When mammalian cloning was first announced, Rush Limbaugh and others argued that scientists would never be able to create anything that has a soul in a lab. But now anti-biotech activists say that even single cells sitting in petri dishes, cells that will never gestate in a womb, are people with souls and with the rights of citizens—indeed, with rights that outweigh the needs of Parkinson's and diabetes sufferers.

Anti-biotech activists tell us not to define human life in reductionist, materialistic terms. But then they tell us that adult stem cell research is morally acceptable—even though the presence or absence of an eggcell membrane is the only discernible difference between the cells used in adult stem cell research and the cells used in embryonic stem cell research. That microscopic barrier, sitting in a petri dish and fused to a DNA packet by an artificial electrical stimulus, makes the difference between a fellow citizen and mere medical supplies? One might think there was just a bit more to human nature than that.

And surely anti-biotech forces have been quicker than pro-biotech forces to spin current research in order to bolster their political arguments. William Kristol now argues that therapeutic cloning, even if it works, will be so inefficient that it might as well be banned (though many scientists seem to disagree with him—and a capitalist should know that inefficient practices tend to disappear without the need for bans anyway). Wesley J. Smith ("Congress and Cloning," July 1/July 8) expresses the oft-heard conservative confidence in adult stem cell research, while most scientists remain unsure that adult stem cells have the plasticity of embryonic stem cells.

Cohen is right to want thorough and thoughtful debate about biotechnology. Defenders of science have long shown their willingness to debate topics such as the atomic bomb or the proper protocols for experimental surgery. But a good debate means contending with your opponent's best arguments, not concocting apparent contradictions in order to avoid the real arguments.

Todd Seavey
New York, NY

A Half-Baked Story?

In "Mixed Legacy: The Rise and Fall of Duncan Hines" (July 1/July 8), Edmund Levin has swallowed an urban myth: that by calling for fresh eggs, rather than including dehydrated eggs in the formula, as had been done in earlier cake mixes, the Hines product "gave the housewife the feeling she was doing real baking."

It's amazing that nobody blinks at the suggestion that dehydrated eggs are every bit as good as fresh. (Go to a survivalist store and get some to try, if they still stock them.) I remember when the Hines cake mixes came in and how much better their flavor and texture were than those from the earlier mixes. They tasted exactly like one of my mother's scratch cakes. If all she wanted was a standard white or yellow cake, that *was* "real baking," less the mindless sifting and measuring, so it was not inconsistent for a food-lover like Hines to lend it his name.

The myth seems to date to the late '70s, when feminist contempt for homemakers was in full howl. The fact that anybody can repeat it without a thought shows how easily we are seduced by the culture of disdain for ordinary people.

Charles Perry
Staff Writer, Food Section
Los Angeles Times
Sylmar, CA

Edmund Levin Responds: Charles Perry is certainly correct that the addition of fresh eggs to cake mixes was an improvement over dehydrated eggs. And cake mixes do have their place. But that's not the point. Hines had a lifelong disdain for any food that was not "from scratch." So it's still a mystery why Hines—who was obsessed from childhood with the quality of food and never had any taste for "convenience"—put his name on a cake mix.

Even America's foremost cake mix apologist, Ann Byrn, author of the best-selling *The Cake Mix Doctor*, admits industrial products need additional flavoring to eliminate that "cake mix taste."

Is it just an "urban legend" that part of the intention was to make housewives feel they were doing "real baking"? In 1951, *Advertising Age* remarked approvingly on the shrewd marketing plan. Previously, "mixes were promoted mainly as a convenience product. . . . Just add water and pop in the oven." But "the Duncan Hines mix turned the tables on the established brands by telling the housewife to add two fresh eggs."

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Civil Hysteria

Once there was a time, while America was at war, when our government refused to grant its captured enemies, very much including the oddball U.S. citizens among them, access to the regular criminal courts. And the nation's leading newspapers and other such purveyors of advanced opinion rose up as one in reaction—and cheered. Then the Supreme Court announced it would review the situation. And the newspapers turned grumpy. Then the Supreme Court reversed course, lickety-split, and said the government's detentions and planned secret trials were a-okay. And everybody cheered again. "The niceties of jurisprudence," snorted the *Nation* (yes, the same magazine, and no, we're not making this up), "can be carried too far, and in this case the procedure was beginning to take on such overtones of fantasy that the Supreme Court's refusal to give the defendants standing in the civil courts came in the nick of time." Within days, all eight of the prisoners at issue had been tried and convicted, and six of them had been executed. News of which executions became public only after the fact. This, too, the *New York Times* approved.

Nowadays, in retrospect of course, President Roosevelt's handling of the 1942 "Nazi saboteurs" case appears rather outlandish, creepy even. No modern president would so much as dream of treating wartime detainees that way. President Bush certainly wouldn't. "Compared to past wars led by Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt, the Bush administration has diminished relatively few civil liberties," suggest the University of Chicago's Jack Goldsmith and Cass Sunstein in a forthcoming analysis of the home-front "legal culture." And yet, they note, at least "within elite circles," Bush's relatively mild prisoner-of-war policies have been met with outright horror, where Roosevelt's positively authoritarian ones were enthusiastically embraced. Why is that, they ask? The commonplace answer that Bush's detention policies stand on a weaker legal foundation than Roosevelt's, Goldsmith and Sunstein conclude, is "unpersuasive."

Instead, they argue, current editorial page denunciations of the Ashcroft Justice Department should properly be viewed as the product of a historical "ratchet effect" whereby "essential" civil liberties are conceived more expansively with every succeeding war—each conflict's specific legal "abuses," recognized as such only after armistice, being transformed into a new set of categorical taboos for the future. Goldsmith and Sunstein are nervous about this phenomenon. "The danger," they write, "is that in an age of anthrax, nuclear suitcases, and other easy-to-conceal weapons of mass destruction, the threat posed by al Qaeda and other terrorists might warrant tradeoffs between liberty and security that are inconsistent with ordinary respect for civil liberties." Ordinary respect for an ever growing list of civil liberties, that is to say, might "lead some to underestimate the threat we actually face."

One need not fully share this worry—about the practical effect of "ordinary" judicial procedures on America's capacity to defend itself against terrorism—to concur in Goldsmith and Sunstein's implied judgment that there's a pandemic of civil libertarian hysteria underway in certain "elite circles" just now. Fresh outbreaks occur on an almost daily basis. Last week, for example, at a Coronado, California, judicial conference hosted by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher told his distinguished audience—and got a nice round of applause for it, too—that Justice Department detention policies now remind him of how, "when I was in the Carter administration, I was in Argentina and I saw mothers in the streets protesting, asking for the names of those being held, those who had disappeared." Christopher offered this spectacularly out-of-proportion analogy in direct response to a presentation by his co-panelist at the conference, Assistant Attorney General Viet Dinh. That would be the same Viet Dinh whose own father really did "disappear" into a Vietnamese reeducation camp in June 1975. Very much the way Christopher's Argentinians "disappeared." But very much *not* the way anyone has been dealt with lately here in the United States.

Now, Warren Christopher, we freely concede, is a desiccated old prune. And he plainly hasn't spent a nanosecond familiarizing himself with the particular legal questions at issue here. And what he says is fatuous. He is easy to dismiss, in other words. But it remains the case, just the same, that what Christopher is saying, drained of its exaggeration, is what plenty of people *not* so easy to dismiss are saying, too. Therein lies a mystery.

Take Stuart Taylor Jr., for instance, who, week in and week out, writes as thoughtfully and well about the law, for a nonspecialist audience, as anyone in America. Here Taylor is, though, in his column for the current issue of *National Journal*, raising his own version of the standard

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alarm about "dangers" inherent in the Bush administration's "preference for military detention over criminal prosecution" where alleged terrorists are concerned. The denouement of the John Walker Lindh trial, Taylor argues, clearly establishes that such a preference is misguided: Lindh was prosecuted in a regular, open court (more or less), where "weaknesses" in the prosecution's case could be and were exposed, and where things consequently worked out just about right. Standard procedural protocols were observed. Lindh was spared the death penalty. The government secured his assistance in its ongoing investigations. Neat.

Where the Justice Department has skirted the courts and incarcerated al Qaeda suspects as "enemy combatants" by "fiat," however, Taylor would have it that nothing is neat—indeed that everything we most cherish about our legal system is in peril. Look, he says, at Yasser Hamdi, the U.S. citizen taken prisoner with his Taliban unit in Afghanistan, who is now being held—without criminal charge—in a Norfolk, Virginia, Navy brig. The "enemy combatant" designation being used to justify Hamdi's detention is completely unreviewable by the federal courts, according to the government, according to Stuart Taylor. Hamdi almost certainly *is* an "enemy combatant," granted. But what about others like him who might similarly fall into the Defense Department's clutches? Are they to be hidden away forever, denied any chance to establish their innocence to an independent authority, in a radical "departure . . . from centuries of Anglo-American jurisprudence"?

We find it difficult to account for such complaints merely by reference to real-world facts. About the Lindh case, we would point out that its defendant, the suburban California teenager cum Wahhabi lunatic, was hardly the kind of fellow our Marines are likely to confront very often on the battlefield. Moreoever, Lindh's sentence, rather than signaling "weaknesses" in the indictment lodged against him, looks more to us like the typical leniency-for-cooperation plea bargain of a guy who sort of wishes he could be a suburban California teenager once again. The Lindh case, in short, may not be the best crystal ball through which to predict what regular criminal prosecutions of al Qaeda operatives would entail.

Zacarias Moussaoui, whom Stuart Taylor neglects to mention, is the more obvious—and disturbing—model. Moussaoui is now being given every inch of the civil-court trial the Justice Department's critics think generally appropriate. And the early results—even, or perhaps especially, from a civil libertarian perspective—do not look good. A man would have to have a heart of stone to read the transcript of Moussaoui's rearraignment hearing last Thursday without quailing a little. Unlike Lindh, apparently, Moussaoui really means it: He hates and mistrusts America. And so he hates and mistrusts America's courts. And so he is representing himself *pro se*—and in the process he is committing slow-motion suicide, without even realizing it, while a talented and conscientious U.S. district judge, Leonie Brinkema, vainly tries to protect his interests.

MOUSSAOUI: I will be able to prove that I have certain knowledge of September 11, and I know exactly who done it. I know which group, who participated, when it was decided. I have many information. . . . I, Moussaoui Zacarias, in the interests to preserve my life, enter with full conscience a plea of guilty, because I have knowledge and participated in, in al Qaeda. I am a member of al Qaeda.

BRINKEMA: Mr. Moussaoui, you have to stop, or I'll have the marshals remove you.

MOUSSAOUI: I pledge *bayat* to Osama bin Laden. . . . I am guilty.

At this rate, precisely *because* he has been accorded full access to the regular federal courts, Zacarias Moussaoui, the gears of those courts grinding away in their regular fashion, is going to win himself a lethal injection—even though the case against him remains entirely circumstantial. Does the fact that it all will be "his fault" make it any less an embarrassment?

And mightn't Yasser Hamdi and the other "enemy combatants" being held in military custody thus be better off where they are? After all, as we read the Justice Department's filings in Hamdi's ongoing *habeas corpus* proceedings, it simply isn't true—as nearly every editorial page would have it—that our government is claiming unilateral, absolute power to call people "enemy combatants" and lock them up for the rest of time. In fact, in the Hamdi case itself, the government has already offered for judicial review a sealed submission that Chief Judge Harvie Wilkinson of the Fourth Circuit says "specifically delineates the manner in which the military assesses and screens enemy combatants to determine who among them should be brought under Department of Defense control" and further "describes how the military determined that petitioner Hamdi fit the eligibility requirements applied to enemy combatants for detention." What's more, Justice Department lawyers have themselves acknowledged, by reference to Supreme Court precedents which suggest as much explicitly, that the judiciary may "call upon the executive to provide 'some evidence' supporting [enemy combatant] determination[s]"—and may also, by logical extension, invalidate such determinations if it turns out the evidence is wholly insubstantial.

How on earth does any of this constitute an outrage against American civil liberties, much less a "departure . . . from centuries of Anglo-American jurisprudence"? And why—given that the executive branch, dispassionately observed, has neither proposed nor claimed authority nor otherwise shown the slightest willingness to pursue the war on terrorism with wild, extra-legal abandon—are so many smart people among us nevertheless disposed to regard the U.S. government as a dangerous, snarling beast?

—David Tell, for the Editors

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"The Decline and Plunge"

The San Francisco Judge and his 9th Court of Appeals took it upon themselves to kick God out of America's Pledge of Allegiance. Of all the insults to America, a God fearing nation, this takes the cake. So, I called on Edward Gibbon, author of the timeless "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

"Mr. Gibbon," I began, "you know all about the San Francisco judge, his 9th Court of Appeals, how they turned the tables on God and Adam and Eve. The Good Lord kicked out those two from the Garden of Eden. Maybe, to get even, the judge and his accomplices kicked God out of America's Pledge of Allegiance. Who knows?"

"Unbelievable," responded Mr. Gibbon. "Yes, I know all about it. In a curious way it's symptomatic of the fall of Rome. This time, with San Francisco, it's more a plunge and less a fall. Sadly, it's additional grease added to the perilous skid down which America plunges either by mistake or by design."

"That serious?" I asked him.

"Yes, I fear," he answered. "Rome is to San Francisco a sister city. It's certainly as vulnerable, something like yet another sister city, Troy, another damsel in distress."

"How? Why?" I wondered.

"Different strokes for different folks," Mr. Gibbon continued. "This time, it's not the Greeks nor a Trojan horse at San Francisco's Golden Gate. The horse that threatens is made of a judge and his court of law."

"Now I get it," I said, and I did.

"Into San Francisco rolls this 21st Century Trojan horse. Out pour the judge's and court's plotters. They run rampant through that city's streets. Since God is no longer there any church, synagogue and mosque falls victim to the marauding godless. That's no surprise. It's to be expected. With no longer any place to dwell, God is homeless. And that's what America will allow to happen?"

"Saints preserve us!" I nearly shouted.

"Yes, indeed," went on Edward Gibbon. "What happens to San Francisco spreads to other American sister cities. Look carefully at the Judge's Trojan horse constructed by him and his court and now menacingly parked before any other American city's vulnerable entrance."

"But is it possible?" I asked Mr. Gibbon.

"Yes, alas," he replied. "What stands between what's a threat and a disaster is but a single and forgiving God of many faiths."

"Lovely, dear America," I said out loud to him and to God's angels if they listened. "Why must it be America that is made to suffer like the perils of Pauleen always on the brink of some misfortune?"

"Yes," Edward Gibbon then concluded, "It's no way to treat a lady."

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Why Republicans Should Be Afraid

An awful lot can go wrong for them this fall. **BY DAVID BROOKS**

AP / Wide World Photos

Chicago Mercantile Exchange, July 19

REPUBLICANS have been pretty sanguine about their prospects in this fall's midterm elections. They shouldn't be. It's true that President Bush's popularity ratings remain high and that, asked which party they would like to see control Congress next year, the voters are still evenly divided. But these numbers may be misleading. In the first place, the corporate scandals will serve to motivate Democratic voters. And in midterm elections, motivation trumps polling, because party loyalists have to be propelled to actually go out and vote. Second, a powerful wave of anxiety is now sweeping across the country as the markets tank. Americans don't connect this anxiety to politics, because it's July. But as November approaches and people begin to think electorally, there could be sharp swings. This has happened in past midterm elections. One party looks fine for months and then suddenly, 10 days before the election, its numbers collapse.

Third and most important, the landscape favors the Democrats. Any number of issues could break their way. The markets could continue their slide. More corporate scandals could come to light. Prescription drug benefits could return to the fore. The SEC could be critical of Dick Cheney's Halliburton stewardship. Democratic attacks on the alleged evils of Social Security privatization could decimate Republicans, as Democrats tie seniors' worries about their pensions to the collapsing markets.

Liberal blogger Joshua Micah Marshall (*www.talkingpointsmemo.com*) recently published the leaked results of a Tarrance Group study commissioned by the National Republican Campaign Committee. The Tarrance recommendations make for disconcerting reading for Republicans. "Democrat attempt to label GOP position on Social Security as favoring 'privatization' presents serious threat. GOP, Members, and candidates must fight back against this label," the study reported. "AARP is a dangerous adversary in this debate. They have greater credibility than any entity on this issue and are not viewed as partisan," the consultants continued. They recommended that Republicans respond to the issue by declaring, "Social Security is a sacred trust. It must be saved." They suggested that Republicans not try simply to change the subject or laud themselves for having the courage to tackle the entitlements issue.

The Tarrance Group offers effective recommendations on how Republicans can portray themselves as fervent anti-privatizers and so neutralize the issue. And Republicans may be able to neutralize other Democratic issues. But that's cold comfort, because there are few issues that offer significant Republican upside. The political benefits from the war on terror have been reaped. Domestically, the Republican party is as bereft of plausible policy ideas as at any time in the past quarter century. How exactly do Republicans respond to the current moment? With cuts in the capital gains tax rate? With the flat tax? With deregulation? With a crusade to shrink the size of government? With entitlement reform? These ideas, admirable on the merits, are as politically implausible now as any that can be imagined. Worse, many of them have the feel of a bygone era.

The public may not blame Republicans for the market's collapse, but sooner or later people will ask, What are you going to do to get us out of this mess? It won't be enough to repeat that the fundamentals are sound, or to mention the important work that was done to organize the Office of Homeland Security.

Part of the reason some Republicans have been lulled into a false sense of security is that the Democratic diagnosis of the coming election is wrong. Many Democrats—including Dick Gephardt, who last week predicted his party would pick up as many as 40 House seats—seem to think they can win by linking Republicans to dishonest corporate fat cats, by keeping the issue of CEO scandals alive and in the public eye straight through the fall.

That's unlikely. The Enron scandal broke months ago. That was the scandal that presented maximum peril to Republicans. (How many times in U.S. history has such a huge scandal

David Brooks is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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revolved around one of the closest supporters of the president of the United States?) But Enron produced no political fallout.

Still, the Democrats seem to think that there is this organized entity called Corporate America, made up of senior executives, Republicans, white country clubbers, and people who were cheerleaders and prom kings in high school. If they can get the rest of the country to hate these people as much as they do, then they will win elections. Because they have this category in their heads, Democrats see the corporate scandals as tainting the whole Republican party.

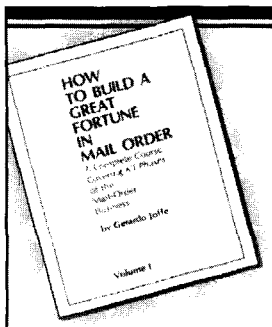
But Americans who have not been suckled on the *Marx-Engels Reader* do not carry these categories around in their heads. They perceive no one organized entity, Corporate America, that ruthlessly exploits another, Ordinary Americans. Most people believe, rather, that there are some dishonest people who have done horrible things in corporate America. But also that George W. Bush is an admirable man who is doing his best for the country, even though he once worked for a corporation, and has friends who are in business. In other words, they see the scandals as a crisis of character, not a crisis of capitalism.

The core threat for Republicans is not the scandals. It's the institutions and the economy. Over the past months the country has been hit by a barrage of stories about Wall Street, the Catholic church, the FBI, and CIA—all of which suggests that many fundamental institutions of American life are in disrepair. Anxiety over this is reflected in a sharp rise in the percentage of people who say the country is on the wrong track. In a survey conducted July 11-14, 49 percent of voters told Ipsos-Reid pollsters that the country is headed south, a rise of 10 percentage points over the previous three weeks. When that happens, incumbents, and the party perceived to be in power, suffer.

What's more, the rise of a large investor class makes it more likely that market declines will have political effects. Republicans have been comfortably assuming that the rise of this investor class would help them, because as people put money in the market, studies show, they are more likely to vote Republican (even controlling for income). But those studies were conducted in the 1990s, as markets rose. It could be that the axe swings both ways. As the market drops, investors may take revenge on the people they think lured them there. Anglo-American journalist John O'Sullivan has pointed out that British homeowners who were encouraged to buy homes in the 1980s by Margaret Thatcher took it out on Thatcher in 1990 when home values dropped.

American exit polls in 2000 revealed that voters who were bearish on the markets tended to vote for Gore, while the bulls backed Bush. What if the bulls of 2000 blame Republicans for the market of 2002? That's a lot of angry voters. According to a Gallup Poll conducted July 9-11, 43 percent of Americans think the markets will go down over the next year, while only 29 percent think they will rise. This is the first time in a year that bears have been in the majority. Meanwhile, the number of people who believe the overall economy is in excellent or good shape has dropped to 35 percent from 69 percent when George Bush took office.

The Republicans control the debate on the war on terror and domestic security, but while they have admirably spent their days keeping the country safe from attack, Democrats have been seizing control of the domestic agenda. They are now the most aggressive champions of domestic reform, and will be until Republicans come up with their own (rather than just a me-too) agenda on domestic reform, a platform that is as startling and brave as their international effort to combat the axis of evil. ♦



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He's No LBJ

How Daschle stacks up against the very model of a modern majority leader. BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENT DWIGHT EISENHOWER was a Republican, Senator Lyndon Johnson a Democrat. But in his memoir *Waging Peace*, Eisenhower remembered Johnson, the Senate majority leader during his presidency in the 1950s, as a friend and frequent ally. "We had our differences, especially in domestic and economic policy," Eisenhower wrote. "Yet, when put in perspective, he was far more helpful than obstructive." When President Bush writes his memoirs, he's unlikely to recall his Senate majority leader, Tom Daschle, in the same way.

The LBJ model of a majority leader—Johnson held the post from 1955 to 1960—has become prominent again with the publication of Robert Caro's *Master of the Senate*, the third volume of his biography of Johnson. Caro declares Johnson the greatest Senate majority leader ever, a verdict few historians would quibble with. And so the question is, How does Daschle, like Johnson a Democrat confronting a Republican president, measure up against LBJ?

The answer is not well on two hallmarks of Johnson's tenure: the ability to work with a president of the other party and a willingness to take on a major constituency group of his own party. But that's not the end of the story. Times have changed dramatically on Capitol Hill since LBJ's era. And Daschle follows a different model from Johnson's—more patient, more liberal, more partisan, and less conciliatory. Majority leader since June 2001, Daschle may prove to be more effective than either the White House or congressional Republicans admit.

Johnson's favorite tactic was to side with Eisenhower, notably on foreign policy, and drive a wedge through Senate Republicans, picking off the liberals and moderates. Daschle rarely joins with Bush, instead rigidly sticking to Democratic positions and waiting for the president to acquiesce. This worked successfully on the farm bill, airline security legislation, and an economic stimulus package—and is likely to succeed again with accounting reform and with passage of an energy bill stripped of Bush's cherished provision to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling.

But the absence of an LBJ-like relationship with the White House and Daschle's unwillingness to break with Democratic interest groups limit what he can achieve. Chances are Johnson, were he Senate leader today, would forge agreements with the White House on a prescription drug benefit, a patients' bill of rights, and terrorism reinsurance. These are high priority issues on which Daschle seems unwilling to compromise. At least on a drug benefit, the Johnson tactic of reaching agreement with the president and dividing GOP members of Congress could work. True, it would boost Bush. But it would also allow Democrats to claim credit for a popular measure in time for the midterm congressional elections in November.

Oddly enough, Daschle is a great fan of Caro's biography of LBJ. He's read all three volumes, listened to *Master of the Senate* on tape, and spent an evening with Caro talking about Johnson and his time. He regards Caro's work as second only to William Manchester's *The Last Lion* (on Winston Churchill), Daschle's favorite biography.

According to Daschle, three huge changes from LBJ's time have reduced the sway of a majority leader. Johnson excelled in building personal relationships with senators. But that's far harder today, Daschle insists, because senators "aren't around" on evenings and weekends when personal ties could be nurtured. Then there's the press. "Instantaneous media attention compounds and makes more complex the challenge" of running the Senate, he says. Finally there's the role of fund-raising. "You can read all 1,200 pages, and I don't think you can find the word fund-raising in that book." Johnson took care of raising money with a few phone calls, but Daschle devotes many hours each week to this distracting task.

While Daschle isn't as powerful a majority leader as Johnson, he has considerable clout nonetheless—and a great deal more than his Republican predecessor, Trent Lott. "The Democratic leader has both carrots and sticks," Lott says. "The Republican has few carrots and no sticks." Republican committee assignments are governed by strict seniority. But Daschle decides all of them himself, has many patronage staff appointments, and determines the budget of party groups such as the Democratic Policy Committee.

Rather than concentrate on senators one-on-one as LBJ did, Daschle stresses the caucus of all 50 Senate Democrats. "In all the time LBJ was leader, they only had one annual conference," Daschle says. "His strategy was to never meet as a group" because it might lead to an uprising. "I take the opposite point of view. I think there's a group chemistry that's produced. . . . We now meet three times a week. I think inclusion is the only way to keep my people together." Whatever the cause, Daschle has maintained amazing unity among Democrats, who have just a one-vote edge over Republicans.

To get his way, Daschle has run roughshod over Democratic committee chairmen. He refused to let the chairman of the Finance Ccommittee, Max Baucus, handle the economic stimulus package or the prescription

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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drug benefit. He grabbed the energy bill from Jeff Bingaman's Energy and Natural Resources Committee, to prevent it from approving oil production in the Alaskan wilderness. He wrote the farm bill, trumping Iowa's Tom Harkin, chairman of the Agriculture Committee. And he nullified a bipartisan compromise on terrorism reinsurance, reached by Paul Sarbanes, Banking Committee chairman. Republicans say Daschle defers only to three Senate chairmen: Robert Byrd of the Appropriations Committee, Edward Kennedy of Labor, and Patrick Leahy of Judiciary.

Daschle matches one asset Johnson had as majority leader: an adoring press corps. When the Senate is in session, he presides over a daily "dugout" with reporters. It is good-natured on both sides. Daschle is easygoing, the press corps chummy—in contrast to the hostile attitude of reporters at the White House briefing and the understandable defensiveness of press secretary Ari Fleischer. This pays off for Daschle. His failures get scant attention. The inability of Senate Democrats to produce a budget this year is rarely cited in the media. In May 2001, Daschle promised that approval of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump in Nevada would not pass so long as Democrats control the Senate. Last month Daschle wiggled out of his promise. He declined to keep Yucca off the Senate floor. Once it passed, few stories mentioned Daschle's vow and failure to deliver.

Storing the nation's nuclear waste under Yucca Mountain was the White House position, but there's no evidence Daschle allowed the vote to be helpful to Bush. Daschle's relationship with Bush isn't like that—and isn't like LBJ's with Ike either. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, Daschle, Lott, House Speaker Denny Hastert, and Minority Leader Dick Gephardt began gathering weekly for breakfast at the White House. For weeks, as anti-terrorist legislation was drafted and enacted, Daschle and Bush worked in a warm, bipartisan fashion that was captured in Bush's firm hug of Daschle after his speech to Congress last September 20.

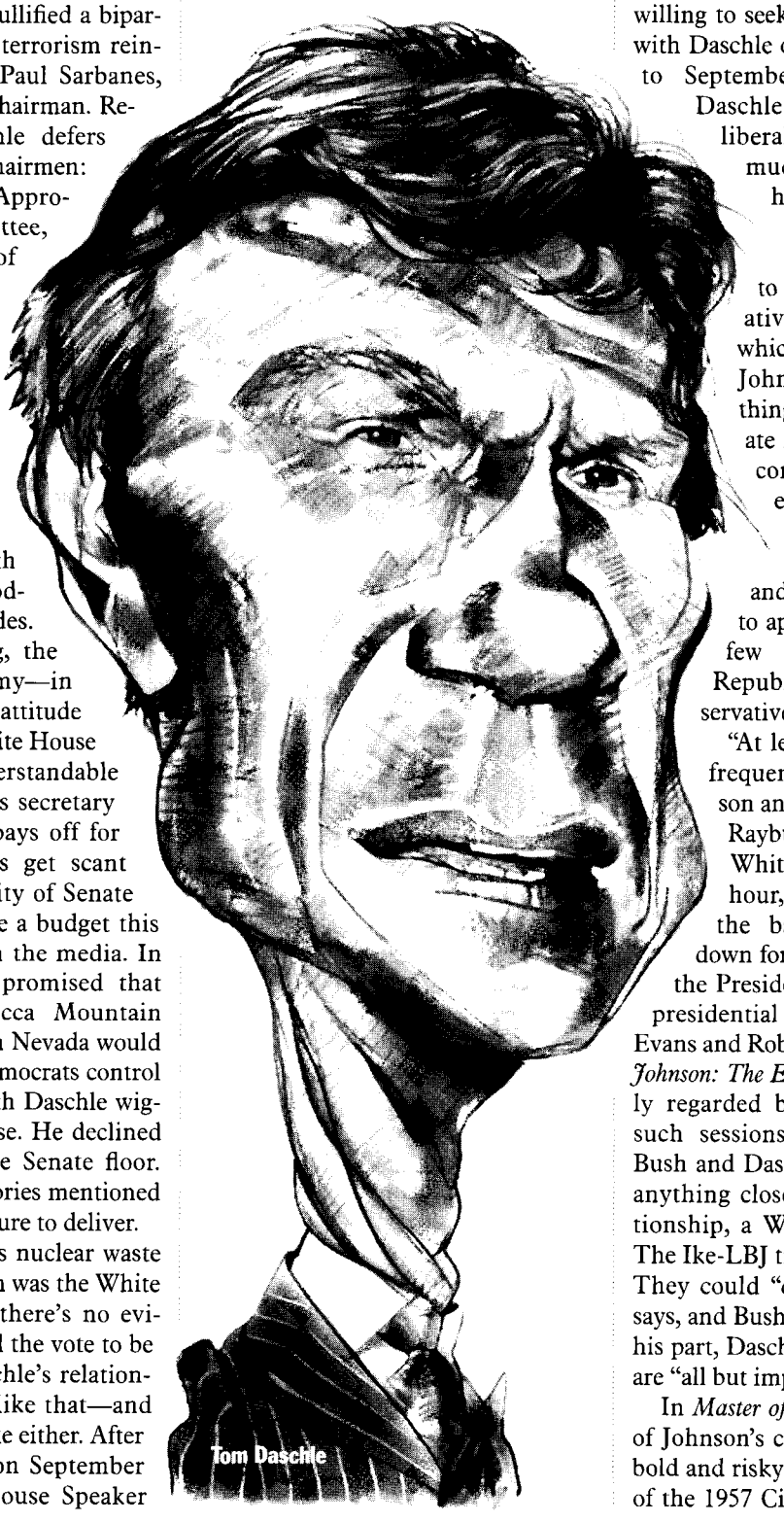

Illustration by Thomas Fluharty

But the relationship cooled. In November, Bush asked a GOP member of Congress what the real story is with Daschle. Bush indicated he was willing to seek bipartisan agreements with Daschle on legislation unrelated to September 11. He was told Daschle was a deeply partisan liberal who wouldn't be much help. And Daschle hasn't been. But Daschle says a huge roadblock is Bush's unwillingness to break with his conservative base in Congress, which is no doubt true. For Johnson and Eisenhower, things were easier. The Senate in the 1950s had many conservative Democrats eager to back Eisenhower, and the president had a bloc of liberal and moderate Republicans to appeal to. Now, there are few liberal or moderate Republicans, fewer still conservative Democrats.

"At least once a month, and frequently more often, Johnson and [House Speaker Sam] Rayburn would drive to the White House at the cocktail hour, enter unseen through the back door, and settle down for a highball or two with the President in the second-floor presidential study," write Rowland Evans and Robert Novak in *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power*, a highly regarded biography of LBJ. No such sessions have occurred with Bush and Daschle. "They don't have anything close to that" sort of relationship, a White House aide says. The Ike-LBJ tie "was based on trust." They could "do business," the aide says, and Bush and Daschle can't. For his part, Daschle says secret meetings are "all but impossible" nowadays.

In *Master of the Senate*, the climax of Johnson's career as leader was his bold and risky engineering of passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Act. To pull

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this off, Johnson broke with the Senate's most cohesive group, conservative Southern Democrats, the group that had promoted his rise to majority leader. He had ulterior motives—politicians always do—but the result was to end the Senate logjam and pass the first of the great civil rights acts.

The closest Daschle has come to breaking with a Democratic interest group is trade promotion authority, and even there it's only a partial break. This authority—like the "fast track" authority that led to the free-trade treaties of the 1970s and '80s—would allow the president to get trade agreements through Congress without amendment, and organized labor is strongly opposed. To soften the blow, Daschle added lavish wage insurance and trade adjustment assistance for workers to the bill. More important, he allowed an exception to be tacked on that may prompt a presidential veto, killing a bill that Johnson would surely have made acceptable to the president.

On other issues, Daschle is a prisoner of interest groups. Because of opposition by trial lawyers, Daschle has blocked a patients' bill of rights and terrorism reinsurance. To satisfy environmentalists, he made defeat of oil drilling in the Arctic mandatory. To please labor and liberals, he insists on the most costly prescription drug benefit. Because of feminists, he's allowed conservative judicial nominations by Bush to be blocked.

A final point. Both Johnson and Daschle recognized the popularity of the presidents they dealt with. For Johnson, this led to a special promise when he was elevated to majority leader. "There will be no personal attacks upon the integrity of the president or upon his intentions," he said. There weren't any. Daschle has made no such promise and Bush lacks Eisenhower's stature. He has raised doubts, at least obliquely, about Bush's ethics at Harken Energy before entering politics and his forthrightness in disclosing pre-September 11 clues about possible terrorist attacks. Times change, and so do majority leaders. ♦

What Cops Can Teach the FBI

Local police are ahead of the feds when it comes to effective law enforcement. BY ELI LEHRER

As America's best-educated, best-equipped, and best-known law enforcement agency, the FBI runs the world's most sophisticated law enforcement labs, keeps national crime statistics, and gives police all over the country plenty of advice on everything from child abuse to credit card fraud. The overbearing federal agent swooping down from Washington to take control of local police investigations became a stock figure in movie and TV crime dramas for good reason. Given its recent track record, however, the FBI might want to begin taking advice from local police agencies rather than dispensing it.

While the 1990s saw sharply dropping crime rates all over the country, the FBI suffered a long string of failures. The September 11 shortcomings and Special Agent Robert Hanssen's espionage activities on behalf of the Russian government have gotten the most attention. But there are serious problems lurking in almost every area of the Bureau's operations. At a time of cascading financial scandals, it appears to have done very little to improve and modernize its capabilities in that area. It has allowed ever more violent multistate criminal syndicates like the Black Gangster Disciples to replace the Italian Mafia as the nation's leading merchants of drugs, sex, and illegal weapons. From child porn distribution to terrorism, nearly every crime the FBI seeks to prevent increased through the 1990s, even as the Bureau's arrests decreased.

Arguably, the Bureau has been spread too thin, and should never have been entrusted with such disparate tasks as counterintelligence, bank robberies, and child kidnappings. But at the same time the FBI has fallen down on the job, local police agencies have gone from success to success. Since 1992, crime has declined in 47 states and about 85 percent of the nation's largest cities, the steepest such drop in American history. Along with stiffer prison sentences, strategies that ask police officers to partner with people in the communities where they work—community policing—best explain the nation's newfound safety. Local police agencies have ushered in a new era of civic safety by creating flexible organizational structures that allow them to respond to new problems, opening their doors to the public, and building simple but effective intelligence operations. If the FBI hopes to remake its dysfunctional culture, it can learn a lot from the beat cops patrolling America's neighborhoods.

While FBI Director Robert Mueller has announced a new focus on terrorism and counterintelligence, little has actually changed. A recent study by Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse shows that, despite the alleged change in emphasis, nearly all of the FBI's work remains directed at arresting drug dealers and bank robbers. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, meanwhile, reports that the small increases in the FBI's terrorism arrests since September 11 come mostly from bookkeeping changes rather than from any

Eli Lehrer, a senior editor at the American Enterprise, *works on the Heritage Foundation's Excellence in Policing Project along with former United States Attorney General Edwin Meese III.*

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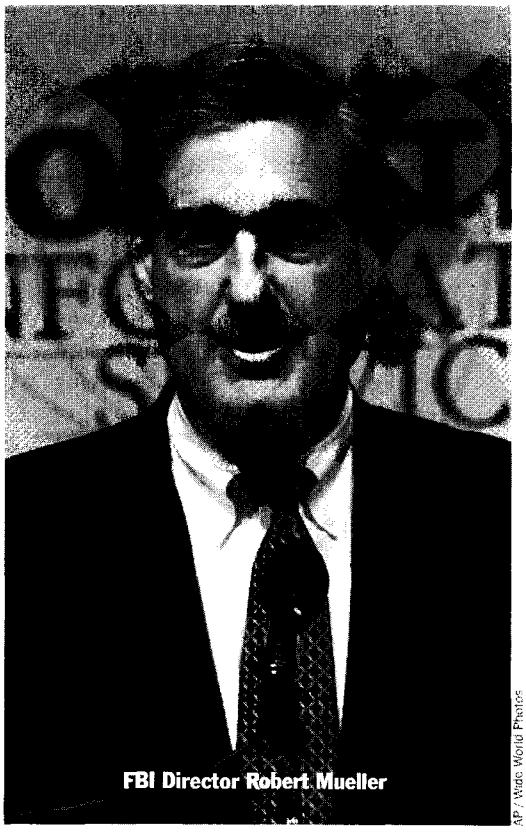
change in strategy. Local police, when forced by events to change their focus, move much more quickly: In cities from Minneapolis to Pasadena, new management techniques allow area commanders to rapidly redeploy personnel to tackle new problems. The New York Police Department—which has almost twice as many employees as the FBI—has changed its organizational structure more since September 11 than has the Bureau. Police departments in Lowell, Mass., Anaheim, Calif., Phoenix, Newark, and elsewhere have sharply limited their use of specialized, single-task units in favor of quick redeployment of more broadly trained officers. If a district commander in Lowell wants to bust a drug house or a Newark police chief wants to investigate a series of stained-glass window thefts, he needs little permission to send dozens of police officers off to work on those very particular problems.

Not coincidentally, well-run police departments have become the most open and welcoming parts of local government. Nearly all of them now allow citizens to ride along with police officers. Many cities use meetings with citizens as the primary forum for setting police priorities. Good local police agencies pay attention to small problems as well as large ones: During late August of last year, I watched a member of the Chicago police department's top brass interrogate a district commander about his response to a loud homeless man in a park.

The FBI, on the other hand, seems to care little about what citizens have to say. The most recent updates to the FBI's community outreach web page reveal that field offices in Buffalo and San Diego canceled community involvement programs after September 11. But most field offices aren't so attentive: In mid-July, the FBI's most recent community involvement report for New York City dated from early 2000. What outreach programs do exist—mostly partnerships with local schools—focus on teaching citizens about the FBI's work rather than inviting them to help. Although the exigencies of federal law enforcement do present special challenges when it comes to community involvement, other federal agencies have found that openness works: The Border Guard, for example, has stemmed the flow of illegal immigrants in many areas by deigning to work with community groups and local police agencies.


FBI Director Robert Mueller

AP/Wide World Photos

The FBI may feel that community outreach is a frippery to be discarded in times of crisis, but this is short-sighted. At their best, community outreach programs are among the finest sources of vital intelligence for police. While larger urban police departments pay informants to infiltrate local gangs, the best method of gathering intelligence is even simpler: Make yourself accessible to tipsters. The Chicago Police Department's famous blue-jeans-wearing tactical team police officers actually became more effective at gathering intelligence once they started wearing bulletproof vests, weapons, and badges on top of their street clothes. On countless occasions in my own reporting, I've seen people rat out criminals in return for a pass on a public drinking rap, a cigarette, taxi service from the police department, or, most often, nothing at all besides the feeling of being a good citizen and helping the police.

In gathering intelligence, good local police agencies rely on people rather than technology. As crime soared in the 1960s and 1970s, most cities spent millions setting up wiretaps, building crime labs, and constructing fingerprint databases. Sophisticated facilities like these helped crack some high-profile cases, but real success against crime required sending thousands of new police officers into the streets, where they returned to the pre-World War II habits of knowing the neighborhoods where they worked, walking beats, and working out of storefront offices. In fact, successful police agencies have increasingly turned technical tasks over to civilian professionals. Arlington, Texas, home to the best-educated large police force in the country, uses civilian crime-scene teams for evidence collection in cases as trivial as an angry boyfriend shooting a slingshot at his girlfriend's workplace window. The FBI already employs far more civilians than special agents, but a great many of its highly trained agents are assigned to tasks like answering media queries and carrying out forensic accounting tasks.

The FBI still recruits many of America's best law enforcers. The administration's plan to have the Bureau focus on terrorism, furthermore, is a major step in the right direction. Nearly all of its personnel are committed, hard-working, and intensely patriotic. They deserve a better-run agency, and by looking to local police forces for inspiration, Director Mueller just might be able to give it to them. ◆

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The Reign of Spain

Repelling Morocco's miniature invasion.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

LAST WEEK, Spain undertook its largest unilateral military operation since 1939. In the wee hours of July 17, 28 Spanish special forces, backed up by four naval vessels and six helicopter gunships, reconquered the 500-yard-long uninhabited island of Perejil, part of the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the north African coast, which a dozen Moroccan soldiers had occupied for six days.

Was the island worth fighting for? Yes, if you think of it as the place that Homer used in the *Odyssey* as the model for Ogygia, the paradise where Calypso keeps Odysseus entranced for seven years in her enchanted grotto. No, if you consider that the grotto is now used as a hideout for drug traffickers and that the island is given over to goats and sheep rowed out to the place by locals to avoid paying shepherds. Spain debated simply *giving up* the island as recently as 1994.

Obviously, what arose with the Moroccan occupation was a question of principle. Here is what happened. On the afternoon of July 11, during the wedding celebrations of Morocco's young king Mohamed VI, a dozen Moroccan soldiers landed on the island and raised their country's flag. Spanish officials believe the king ordered the incursion himself. Whatever the case, it violated Spain's sovereignty. Ceuta and Perejil have been under European rule since 1415, when a Portuguese protectorate was established there. Spain took over those and other Mediterranean possessions at different times in the seventeenth century. Under a bilateral agreement made by Spain and Morocco in 1960, neither country is to establish permanent settlements there. When Spanish civil guards approached the island, they were held off at gunpoint.

Spain sought to resolve the standoff through diplomatic channels. First, it requested an explanation from Morocco. This request was met with silence. Then European Commission president Romano Prodi and the Danish government, which controls the European Union's revolving presidency, requested the removal of Moroccan troops. This request was met with derision. The Moroccan minister of foreign affairs, Mohamed Benaissa, called the international press together and attempted to treat the situation as a joke. The maneuver, he said, was merely an operation aimed at foiling smuggling and controlling illegal emigration from Morocco. "We're not going to invade the island with a dozen soldiers," he added, as the Moroccan flag waved over Perejil. Then NATO issued a communiqué describing the Moroccan occupation as an "unfriendly act."

Days of negotiations followed, in which American envoys played an informal role, exerting heavy pressure at the royal wedding festivities. When Morocco affirmed it had no intention of removing its soldiers, Spain attacked at dawn on July 17. It captured all six Moroccans remaining on the island.

As is usual when the First World comes in violent conflict with the Third, the responses were asymmetrical. Morocco and its allies in the Arab League made mighty claims of implacable irredentism. Morocco called the Spanish operation a "flagrant act of aggression." The newspaper *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* said the raid "revealed to the world the true face of a Spain that is dominating, arrogant, and colonialist."

Spain, on the other hand, proclaimed a desire to compromise even as its troops were landing. It promised to pack up and go home if Mohamed VI would only give a "clear and unambiguous statement" that he would not invade again. He refused. Then Benaissa let drop in an interview with SER radio that Morocco wouldn't reinvade if Spain simply left. The Spanish government said it would indeed leave if only the Moroccans would make that same statement officially. They wouldn't. Spain's minister of foreign affairs, Ana Palacio, reiterated that her country was ready to leave the island. "We just don't want a Moroccan politics of *faits accomplis*," she said.

Spain's Western allies, meanwhile, responded with a subtlety verging on agnosticism. The European Union countries, under Denmark's leadership, sought to issue a statement backing Spain's right to defend itself, but they were blocked by France. After Spain's recovery of Perejil, European Commission president Prodi said, "We continue to be worried by the events on the island"—as if the situation had been exacerbated rather than resolved. Prodi did not refer *at all* to the original Moroccan landing—an omission that rendered the Commission's statement even weaker than the one Kofi Annan issued from the United Nations (Annan condemned "all unilateral actions adopted up to this moment"). By Friday, July 19, the U.S. State Department was the key go-between. It sounded a decidedly French note, describing the standoff as an "unfortunate situation that involved two nations that are the United States' friends." Colin Powell said that any troops that remained on the island "would only make negotiations more difficult." *El País*, flagship paper of Spain's left intelligentsia, warned that taking back the island

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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would start a whole new round of troubles. The *Financial Times*, while calling Morocco's invasion "ill-advised," called Spain's an "act of folly."

Did they have a point? It depends how you look at it. Spain's insistence on continuing to claim a tiny chunk of Africa may weaken its position in negotiations over the British possession of Gibraltar, which abuts its territory. But Spain also would have run a big risk by doing nothing. Fernando Arias Salgado, Spain's ambassador to Morocco, worried that Morocco was releasing a trial balloon, hoping to threaten Spain's two large African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. He was right. Benaissa upped the ante in a press conference in Paris on Friday, warning that negotiations should begin on the status of Melilla; and Moroccan soldiers have taken to blocking pedestrian (but not tourist) access to Ceuta, whose economy depends on Moroccan shoppers.

Morocco is one of the more trustworthy nations in the Islamic world. That's not saying much, but the country does have a large, educated middle class and a semi-free press. France has deep economic ties with it. Spain rerouted an energy pipeline from Algeria through Morocco out of neighborly spirit not long ago (and has disavowed any intention of now seeking economic sanctions against Morocco). The Bush administration is interested in negotiating a far-ranging free-trade treaty with Morocco, of the sort negotiated with Chile after NAFTA. Most important, Morocco is cooperating in the war against al Qaeda. Perhaps because of this, Mohamed VI and his government believe they can get away with trying to shake concessions loose from the West.

The recapture of Perejil was a Spanish mission; the country sought no help or endorsement either from NATO or from any of its allies. This was exactly the sort of unilateral mission that "Europe," when regarding the United States, professes to deplore. But it has been met with unconditional support from NATO and widespread approval within Spain. As such, this military and diplomatic success, though miniature in scale, is a standing rebuke to the multilateral, post-national, Kantian utopianism that is the prevailing style of European Union diplomacy.

This ought to raise questions among the Europeans, whose "dialogue"-based foreign policy leaves them almost wholly defenseless against what Ana Palacio calls the politics of *faits accomplis*. What if next time Morocco, aiming its appeal to native nationalists, sends a much larger force, with heavy weaponry? Spain has answered that question in spades—it will fight, and it will prevail. But what if Morocco, aiming its appeal at the "European human rights community," decides to occupy Perejil with a gang of children throwing stones? That is Europe's question to answer—and the answer is shrouded in doubt. ♦

China Without Illusions

Washington wakes up to Beijing's intentions.

BY TOM DONNELLY

FIVE YEARS AGO, anyone calling China a strategic problem was dismissed as looking for some new "cold war" enemy to fight. And when President Bush initially characterized the People's Republic as a "strategic competitor," Washington's old foreign policy hands collectively clucked their disapproval at such a rash idea.

But what was once controversial has now become almost conventional. The recent release of two major government studies indicates a new mainstream opinion on China. Two weeks ago, the Pentagon published its *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, a document mandated by Congress. The report is a thorough account of the improvements in Beijing's capabilities and delivers an insightful analysis of Chinese security and military strategy.

The other new report is perhaps more important. The massive tomes issued by the U.S.-China Security Review Commission—yet another congressional initiative—are just the sort of bipartisan product that, in Washington, represents a summary of respectable opinion. Yet the report pulls no punches: "[The United States and China] have sharply contrasting worldviews, competing geostrategic interests, and opposing political systems." Increasing economic ties "have not softened China's egregious behavior on human rights nor changed its strategic perceptions that the U.S. is its principal obstacle to growing regional influence." That's from the first paragraph of the executive summary.

More stunning still is the commission's challenge to the premise of American China policy throughout the Clinton years, which is still the formal position of the Bush administration: that trade with China would have an inevitable liberalizing effect. This policy is just a "hypothesis," in the Commission's reckoning, and the panel notes that American trade has helped to strengthen the PRC militarily as well as economically. "The Commission does not believe that anyone can confidently forecast the

Tom Donnelly is a senior fellow at the Project for the New American Century.

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future of China and the U.S.-China relationship, and contends that while we may work and hope for the best, our policymakers should prepare for all contingencies."

This is not how senior officials thought about Beijing during the 1990s as they tried to build a strategic partnership. President Clinton, champion surfer of public opinion in the post-Cold War, dot-com decade of good feelings, looked forward to "working with China and expanding areas of cooperation." Beijing would help "advance fundamental American interests and values." Clinton eagerly sought summits with Chinese leader Jiang Zemin and looked forward to an emerging world order where China was "not only playing by the rules of international behavior, but helping to write and enforce them."

Even as Washington opinion takes a harder stand on Beijing, however, there are many for whom hope springs eternal. For example, the lone dissenter among the Security Review commissioners is William Reinsch, a principal architect of and apologist for the Clinton administration's China and trade policies. The majority report, Reinsch argues, "adds to the level of paranoia about China." The best Reinsch can say is that China "is a work in progress" and that American policy should strive for détente. His fellow commissioners "fail to understand that U.S. and Chinese geopolitical interests in the region will inevitably diverge regardless of what kind of government China has."

Still, the speed at which the pendulum has swung is remarkable; Reinsch's rhetoric sounds like a tinny echo from the détente days of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union would last forever and Russia was impervious to democracy. But with the increasing evidence of China's international ambitions and an American foreign policy establishment that now chooses to recognize the implications, there is little prospect for any "engagement" that shrinks from confrontation, let alone any long-term "partnership."

The Security Commission makes an overwhelming case that "China's leaders view the United States as a partner of convenience, useful for its capital, technology, know-how and market," but that they regard America "as China's long-term competitor for regional and global military and economic influence." In sum, Beijing seeks to unseat the United States as the preeminent power in East Asia and, eventually, to undermine its sole superpower status.

The Commission also defines a useful set of "benchmarks" against which to measure Chinese behavior: its proliferation activities; relations with "terror-sponsoring states" like Iran, North Korea, and Iraq; the expansion of Chinese long-range missile forces; policies toward Taiwan; and the pursuit of "asymmetric warfare capabilities and modern military technology that could menace American military forces." But most important, the panel recognizes the main issue is "whether the Communist party maintains its monopoly of political power or shares it with the Chinese people." In other words: *It's the regime, stupid.*

By the Pentagon's standards, most of the military indicators of Chinese behavior are already flashing red warning lights. Using a "net assessment" approach that goes beyond a simple "bean count" of planes, ships, missiles, tanks, or troops, the Pentagon report looks at the relative strength of Chinese forces, particularly across the Taiwan Strait—the scenario that represents the most likely source of a major conflict between the United States and Beijing.

The Pentagon report acknowledges that China may not choose a full-blown invasion of Taiwan: "Beijing's primary political objective in any Taiwan-related crisis, however, likely would be to compel Taiwanese authorities to enter into negotiations on Beijing's terms and to undertake operations with enough rapidity to preclude third-party"—meaning American—"interventions."

This is already a near-nightmare, says the Pentagon. The report concludes that the Chinese military's "offensive capabilities improve as each year passes, providing Beijing with an increasing number of credible options to intimidate or actually attack Taiwan. Should China use force, its primary goal likely would be to compel a negotiated solution on terms favorable to Beijing. Such an approach would necessitate a rapid collapse of Taiwan's national will, precluding the United States from intervening." This scenario is no fantasy. A fair reading of the report, which is authoritative in its reference to Chinese military writings and material developments, makes clear how shaky past assumptions about China have been.

Though the center of opinion about China has come a long way in a short time, it remains unclear whether the administration or Congress is really ready to take the kinds of steps needed to prepare for unhappy "contingencies." Though President Bush regards China as a competitor, it's not clear how much of the policy-making bureaucracy agrees. For example, most of the government is uninterested in the United States organizing a NATO-like coalition of East Asian democracies to counter Beijing's ambitions in the region, or in the United States allying itself more closely and more practically with Taiwan. Though Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has committed himself to "transforming" U.S. forces, in part to prepare for conflict across the Taiwan Strait, it is unclear that these changes can be accomplished in time to catch up to the rapid changes in Chinese capabilities.

In addition, one wonders whether the events following September 11 will put further strains on relations with China. Both the Security Commission and Pentagon studies were written with the presumption that conflict with China would be focused on East Asia—and that it was the only major war, hot or cold, on the horizon. But the war on terrorism and the presence of American military forces in Central, South, and Southeast Asia is a new and powerful wild card in the game. Once again, accepted strategic wisdom may soon be out of date. ♦

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The Coming War with Saddam

Sooner than you think

By Stephen F. Hayes

A curious thing seems to have happened on the way to the war against Saddam Hussein. Despite President Bush's oft-stated commitment to "regime change" in Iraq, media reports have been rife with speculation that military action is unlikely, maybe even off the table.

These reports continued to appear last week even as the second-ranking Pentagon official was dispatched to Turkey—a critical ally in any military offensive against Saddam Hussein—and spoke openly of ousting the Iraqi dictator. They have come despite numerous reports of a military build-up in key Gulf states. They have come amid credible reports that Saddam Hussein's intelligence forces have stepped up their coordination with al Qaeda terrorists, and as Saddam boasts publicly of funding Palestinian suicide bombers. They have come even as military press officers are discussing with some reporters arrangements for coverage of the coming war. Nor did they cease after President Bush plainly outlined his administration's policy of preemption in a speech delivered at West Point.

So, when a reporter asked the president at a July 8 press conference, "Is it your firm intention to get rid of Saddam Hussein?" he was understandably exasperated.

"It's the stated policy of this government to have regime change," Bush declared. "And it hasn't changed."

Three days after that press conference, a front-page story in *USA Today* claimed that Bush's national security team had decided against a preemptive strike on Iraq. "A full-scale invasion of Iraq will require significant provocation by Saddam Hussein's regime—such as invading a neighbor, fielding a nuclear weapon or attacking its minority population, top Bush administration officials have concluded." The article further asserted that the Bush team is thus "raising the bar for an invasion, though by no means has ruled it out."

And three days after that, *Time* magazine's Michael Duffy went even further. He quoted a "top official from one Middle East ally" as saying, "Iraq is over. The window is closed." So, Duffy concluded, "President George W. Bush's team isn't so much preparing for war with Iraq as it is fighting a war with itself about whether and how to fight."

What's happening here seems clear enough. Administration officials opposed to military intervention in Iraq—a dwindling number—are losing one internal battle after another. So they're taking the fight public in an attempt to change Bush's mind.

But they're fighting a battle whose outcome was decided months ago. "It was over by the State of the Union," says one senior administration official.

In fact, the discussions truly taking place behind the scenes at the highest levels of the administration today are revealing for another reason: War with Iraq may come sooner than we think. Among the most pressing concerns are determining the size and shape of the effort; using Saddam's links with al Qaeda to make the "public case" for war with Iraq; and securing congressional authorization. But, however these issues are resolved, the basic question regarding a war to remove Saddam is not "if," it's "how and when."

The discussions inside the administration over how best to overthrow Saddam Hussein took a decidedly public turn on May 23, when *USA Today* ran a brief article suggesting deep divisions between military and civilian leaders at the Pentagon. The following day, the *Washington Post*'s military reporter Tom Ricks fleshed out the debate, positing two distinct approaches. The first, attributed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for 250,000 ground troops. The second, said to be favored by the Pentagon's civilian leadership and Gen. Wayne Downing, a top national security adviser, favored massive air attacks to complement U.S. Special Forces on the ground working with the Iraqi opposition. This second approach was known as the "Downing plan."

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

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In a testament to Ricks's record of solid reporting, his article spawned several copycats and helped define a new conventional wisdom on Iraq, one that persists to this day. But several sources—both in the Pentagon and elsewhere in the national security structure—say that disagreement within the administration has been exaggerated in the media.

"It is not accurate to say that there are deep divisions between the uniformed and civilian leadership," says Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "It is accurate to say that there is an active, constructive, and cordial dialogue on what is a very serious topic."

Of course, there are serious discussions about how best to depose Saddam Hussein. But according to those involved, the deliberations are remarkable not for their acrimony, but for their single-minded focus—removing Saddam—and their courtesy.

"I don't believe there's any deep dissension," says a top defense official with knowledge of Iraq policy. "I've seen that before, and it can be ugly. There's always going to be a wide range of views in any administration. But I just don't see the fighting at the highest levels [in the current one]."

"I just have trouble understanding who's spinning it that way," says a senior administration official.

One possible explanation, offered by several sources, is a misinterpretation—or perhaps a misrepresentation—of the caution that is customary in planning for any use of force. Uniformed leaders are supposed to prepare for worst-case scenarios, after all. In creating combat outlines, military commanders seek out, present, and prepare for even the most horrific possible outcomes.

"The Joint Chiefs did put a briefing together about possible shortages, but they're paid to be cautious," says one administration official involved in the planning. "That certainly wasn't a no-go, and if it was meant as one, that's not how it was received by the president."

General Tommy Franks, who has briefed Bush on Iraq planning at least three times—most recently last Wednesday—presented two very specific concerns. First, he raised the possibility that Saddam will launch chemical and biological attacks—likely enough, since his weapons of mass destruction are crucial to the *casus belli*. A second concern is the possibility of extended warfare in the streets of Baghdad, involving U.S. troops and the few troops sufficiently loyal to Saddam to fight to the death. Franks, though, has been consistently reassuring on the second point.

The troop numbers—widely reported to range between 200,000 and 250,000—were Franks's first best estimate. And while the debate about the size of the forces needed remains "fluid," no one on either the civilian or military side—including Downing, who left the administration last month amid reports that his plan for a smaller operation had been rejected—raised serious objections to those initial numbers. "Even Downing didn't believe in the so-called Downing plan," says one top official. "Pre-September 11, I don't know anyone who said we should send ground troops to Baghdad. Post-September 11, I don't know many who oppose it."

If reporters and mid-level leakers haven't yet figured out that a war with Iraq is just short of inevitable, Turkish prime minister Bulen Ecevit has. After his meeting with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz last week, Ecevit told a Turkish television network, "The American administration is not hiding that it is determined on a military intervention against Iraq."

And, most important, the likelihood of the coming war hasn't escaped Saddam Hussein. In early March, during one stage of the farcical but nonetheless continuing discussions about resuming U.N. weapons inspections, Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri delivered a letter to U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan and the Security Council. "How will the relationship between Iraq and the council be normalized under the present declared U.S. policy which aims at invading Iraq and overthrowing its national government by force?"

That the Iraqi dictator believes an American attack is coming—remember, he insists the Gulf War, "The Mother of All Battles," continues to this day—explains much.

On November 22, 2001, the *Ummat*, a Pakistani newspaper with close ties to the Taliban and al Qaeda, published a shocking report. It claimed that Taha Husseyn, a high-ranking Iraqi diplomat, had traveled to Kandahar for a meeting with Mavlana Jalal ud-Din Haqqani, a Taliban representative. According to the paper, Husseyn was dispatched by Saddam Hussein to offer whatever support he could—arms, money, sanctuary—to Osama bin Laden and Mullah Mohammed Omar.

Although major U.S. news outlets, including the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, had cited the *Ummat*'s reporting after September 11, none of them repeated this development. Of course, it's nearly impossible to assess the credibility of such reports. (The paper today regularly runs front-page pictures of bin Laden, along with his hateful exhortations to harm Jews and Americans.) Still, if the report of a Saddam-al Qaeda alliance were true, successfully prosecuting the war on terrorism would become even more urgent.

Why, skeptics might ask, would Saddam essentially invite the war to Iraq? It's a fair question, but one with an obvious answer: Saddam has long viewed U.S.-led attacks as inevitable.

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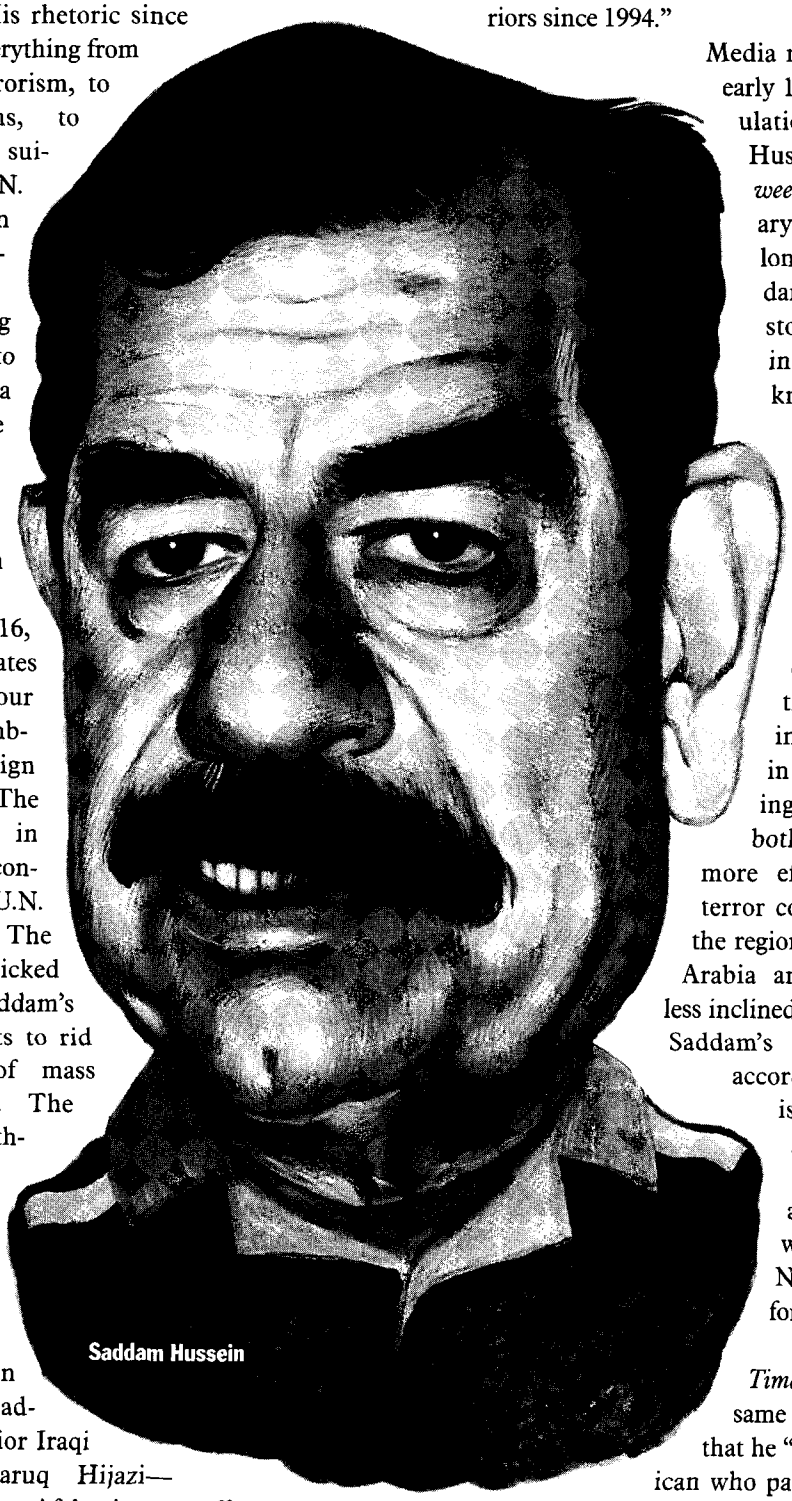
According to intelligence reports, Saddam began moving military assets inside Iraq within hours of the September 11 attacks. By late November, the time of the *Ummat* report, he had already reshuffled his top leadership, rearranged his defenses, and prepared a line of succession. His rhetoric since September 11—on everything from the U.S. war on terrorism, to weapons inspections, to funding Palestinian suicide bombers, to U.N. sanctions—has been defiant, almost provocative.

So, the thinking goes, he reaches out to Islamic extremists in a blatant effort to unite the Arab world against the West. Implausible? Maybe. But it's a scenario with historical precedent.

On December 16, 1998, the United States and Britain began four days of sustained bombing in Iraq—a campaign known as Desert Fox. The bombing came in response to Saddam's continued flouting of U.N. weapons inspections. The inspectors had been kicked out after years of Saddam's thwarting their efforts to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The inspectors had left without accounting for significant pockets of Saddam's WMD arsenal, particularly his bio-weapons program.



Saddam Hussein

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Five days later, on December 21, 1998, Saddam dispatched a senior Iraqi diplomat named Faruq Hijazi—remember that name—to Afghanistan to offer asylum to Osama bin Laden. Although there had been reports of previous meetings between representatives of bin Laden and Hussein, this one carried special import. Hijazi is the former head of Saddam's intelligence operation and, according to Rome's daily *Corriere della Sera* (which broke the story), "the person who has been responsible for nurturing Iraq's ties with the fundamentalist warriors since 1994."

Media reports in late 1998 and early 1999 brimmed with speculation about a bin Laden-Hussein partnership. *Newsweek* magazine, in its January 11, 1999, issue, ran a long article headlined "Saddam + Bin Laden?" The story quoted an "Arab intelligence source" with knowledge of Saddam's plan. "According to this source, Saddam expected last month's American and British bombing campaign to go on much longer than it did. The dictator believed that as the attacks continued, indignation would grow in the Muslim world, making his terrorism offensive both harder to trace and more effective. With acts of terror contributing to chaos in the region, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait might feel less inclined to support Washington. Saddam's long-term strategy, according to several sources, is to bully or cajole Muslim countries into breaking the embargo against Iraq, without waiting for the United Nations to lift it formally."

In an interview with *Time* magazine around the same time, bin Laden warned that he "would target any American who pays taxes to his government." Asked about Iraq, he was blunt: "There is no doubt that the treacherous attack has confirmed that Britain and America are acting on behalf of Israel and the

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Jews, paving the way for the Jews to divide the Muslim world once again, enslave it and loot the rest of its wealth. A great part of the force that carried out the attack came from certain Gulf countries that have lost their sovereignty."

This recent history acquired new relevance when, shortly after the September 11 attacks, Czech intelligence reported a meeting in Prague between a senior Iraqi diplomat named Ahmed Khalil Ibrahim Samir al-Ani and lead hijacker Mohamed Atta. Although U.S. intelligence sources are divided on the reliability of this intelligence, the Czech government stands by it. "The meeting took place," Hynek Kmonicek, Czech ambassador to the U.N., told the *Prague Post*. At the time of the meeting, in April 2001, Kmonicek was a deputy foreign minister. When he asked the Iraqi chief-of-mission what exactly al-Ani did for the Iraqi government, the top diplomat had no answer. "He didn't know [what al-Ani was up to]," Kmonicek said. "He just didn't know."

Other European newspaper reports—in Germany's *Bild* and Britain's *Observer*—claimed that Atta also met in Prague with Faruq Hijazi, the same man who had allegedly offered asylum to bin Laden in 1998. Shortly after the Prague meetings were disclosed, Saddam summoned Hijazi, then his ambassador in Turkey, back to Iraq, though the Iraqi government claimed the recall had nothing to do with reports of his involvement with al Qaeda.

According to sources familiar with the Pentagon project, ties between bin Laden and al Qaeda are deeper than public reports show.

This series of reported contacts between bin Laden and Saddam gained credibility this spring with the publication of an article in the *New Yorker*. Reporter Jeffrey Goldberg visited Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq to document Saddam's gassing of villages there in the late-1980s. What Goldberg found was stunning: numerous firsthand accounts of active coordination between Saddam's top intelligence service, the Mukhabarat, and al Qaeda. Although Goldberg peppers his article with disclaimers—"I was wary; the Kurds have an obvious interest in lining up on the American side in the war against terror"—he nevertheless builds an arresting case.

Sometime after September 1, 2001, a new al Qaeda group called Ansar al-Islam began operating in northern Iraq. Writes Goldberg, "The allegations include charges that Ansar al-Islam has received funds directly from al Qaeda; that the intelligence service of Saddam Hussein has joint control, with al Qaeda operatives, over Ansar al-Islam; that Saddam Hussein hosted a senior leader of al Qaeda [bin Laden's number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri] in Baghdad in 1992; that a number of al Qaeda members fleeing Afghanistan have been secretly brought into territory [in Iraq] controlled by Ansar al-Islam; and that Iraqi intelligence agents smuggled conventional weapons, and possibly even chemical and biological weapons, into Afghanistan."

In a Kurdish prison, Goldberg interviewed an Iraqi intelligence officer named Qassem Hussein Muhammad, who had been captured by the Kurds. Muhammad said that he was sent to northern Iraq by Saddam's Mukhabarat to find Abu Wa'el, a top official in both the Mukhabarat and Ansar al-Islam. "[Abu Wa'el] is an employee of the Mukhabarat," Muhammad told Goldberg. "He's the actual decision-maker in [Ansar al-Islam], but he's an employee of the Mukhabarat."

Goldberg interviewed another man, an Iranian Arab named Muhammad Mansour Shahab, who claimed to have smuggled weapons from Iraq to al Qaeda's base in Afghanistan. Shahab detailed his work running weapons—which Goldberg suggests may have included chemical and biological weapons—to Afghanistan. Then, Goldberg asked how long al Qaeda and Saddam had worked together. He was told, "There's been a relationship between the Mukhabarat and the people of al Qaeda since 1992."

Investigators working on a frightening PBS documentary called *Saddam's Ultimate Solution*, which aired two weeks ago, expanded on and corroborated much of Goldberg's reporting.

Administration officials are understandably wary of commenting on reports that suggest cooperation between bin Laden and al Qaeda. But while they would not speak on the record about links between Saddam and al Qaeda, they take such coordination seriously enough to have assigned a team of intelligence investigators at the Pentagon to explore it. That effort involves an exhaustive review of past intelligence reports for missed clues to a Saddam-al Qaeda connection. According to sources familiar with the project, the findings thus far are "solid," and the ties are significantly deeper than these public reports show. Still, there is no "smoking gun"—something tying Saddam directly to September 11. Other published reports suggest a similar effort is underway at the CIA.

Sources say the links with al Qaeda will not likely be a central part of the coming "public case" against Saddam. They don't have to be. Most polls taken since September 11 show that nearly 7 in 10 Americans favor military action in Iraq. A Gallup poll taken in late June found 61

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percent of those surveyed favor sending U.S. ground troops to do the job, while 83 percent said removing Hussein is "very important" or "somewhat important." As for our soldiers, they appear eager to confront the Iraqi dictator. When Bush addressed 10,000 Army troops from the 10th Mountain division on Friday, one soldier interrupted with an enthusiastic "Let's get Saddam!" The building erupted in a loud chorus of cheers.

The president and his top national security advisers believe that Saddam's development of weapons of mass destruction alone is enough to justify the coming war. Sources point to President Bush's speech at the German Bundestag on May 23 as evidence. Bush never mentioned Iraq directly, but aides say his meaning was clear.

"The evil that has formed against us," said the president, "has been termed the new totalitarian threat. The authors of terror are seeking nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Regimes that sponsor terror are developing these weapons and the missiles to deliver them. If these regimes and their terrorist allies were to perfect these capabilities, no inner voice of reason, no hint of conscience would prevent their use."

When I first started asking questions about congressional authorization for the use of force in Iraq, I focused almost exclusively on when that request would come from the administration. Would the White House go to Congress before the midterm elections? Would Senate Democrats vote to authorize force in Iraq knowing that doing so would boost President Bush and Republicans politically? Could they afford to vote against it? Given the president's rhetoric about the serious potential threat from Saddam and his terrorist allies, can the administration wait until after the new Congress is sworn in, in early January, as the first President Bush did when he sought authorization for the Gulf War?

My questions were frequently answered with a question: Who says we need congressional authorization?

Although no decision has been made about whether to seek congressional authorization—a point emphasized repeatedly in my discussions with administration officials—a robust debate on that sensitive subject is underway.

The argument against seeking authorization is relatively simple: We don't have to and it's strategically unsound. On the first point, even some Capitol Hill Democrats privately concede that Saddam, in rebuilding his WMD program and locking out inspectors, has rather obviously flouted the terms of the cease-fire he agreed to at the end of the Gulf War. The law authorizing force in the Gulf War—Public Law 102-1—is still in effect.

But the second point is a bit flimsier. By seeking authorization, the argument goes, the administration would telegraph its intentions to Saddam and eliminate the element of surprise. But such thinking ignores the fact that Saddam has long anticipated an attack. President Bush has spoken of regime change *ad nauseam*, and the *Washington Post* has carried several front-page stories on the president's authorization of covert attempts to kill Saddam.

Missing from that calculus, of course, is a third reason for forgoing a vote: that Congress might actually reject the use of force. Virtually no one—in the administration or in Congress—suggests such an outcome is conceivable. Indeed, several key Democrats, including Senate majority leader Tom Daschle, House minority leader Dick Gephardt, Senate Foreign Relations chairman Joe Biden, and Senator Joe Lieberman, have already voiced support for military intervention in Iraq.

Those who favor seeking congressional authorization make their case in political terms. They say it's crucial that the Congress—and by extension the American public—be invested in the decision to remove Saddam.

Regardless of how the authorization debate unfolds, Senate Democrats are moving to give the issue a public hearing. Biden already has plans for two sets of hearings on Iraq. The first, scheduled for July 31 and August 1, will include a wide range of experts speaking primarily to three matters: identifying the threat, examining possible responses, and discussing a post-Saddam Iraq. "The senator believes it's time to start a wider national dialogue on a potentially critical decision to go to war," says Norm Kurz, Biden's communications director. "We need to educate the American public on the risks of both action and inaction on Iraq." The administration has indicated it will not participate in these initial hearings, but will likely send representatives to the second set of hearings, tentatively scheduled for some time after Congress returns from its August recess.

On March 11, the six-month anniversary of the September 11 attacks, President Bush spoke at a White House ceremony honoring the victims. He used the occasion to announce: "We have entered the second stage of the war on terror—a sustained campaign to deny sanctuary to terrorists who would threaten our citizens from anywhere in the world."

Later in the same speech, the president previewed what might be the third stage of the war on terror: "Every nation in our coalition must take seriously the growing threat of terror on a catastrophic scale—terror armed with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. America is now consulting with friends and allies about this greatest of dangers, and we're determined to confront it."

What will he say on September 11? ♦

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Pervez, the Friendly Dictator

The problem with Pakistan's President Musharraf

By George Perkovich

"For my money," wrote David Ignatius recently in the *Washington Post*, Pervez Musharraf "is the most courageous and visionary leader on the world scene today." The Pakistani president's help in the hunt for al Qaeda and his apparent decision to fight extremists engaged in violence against India prompted Ignatius's encomium. Pakistani commentators of all persuasions, meanwhile, were lambasting Musharraf for proposing constitutional amendments that would effectively end Pakistan's experiment with democracy.

If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so too is the character of Pervez Musharraf. Few individuals matter more to their country's future—or to U.S. interests—than he. Pakistan is *the* front-line state in the war on terrorism, which is why the United States must do all it can to support Musharraf. And in his own mind, Musharraf *is* Pakistan, which is why many Pakistanis see him as a threat to democracy and to long-term development. When Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Islamabad on July 29, he must, as a good friend, encourage Musharraf's best impulses and discourage his self-destructive ones.

Musharraf's elusive character was on display in early June when Pakistan and India teetered on the edge of nuclear war. First he told visiting Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage that Pakistan would "permanently" halt terrorist infiltrations from Pakistan into Indian-administered Kashmir. This pledge enabled Armitage to persuade Indian leaders to defuse the crisis. Then days later, Musharraf told *Newsweek*'s Lally Weymouth that he had assured President Bush, "Nothing is happening across the Line of Control"—but also, "I'm not going to give you an assurance that for years nothing will happen."

This ambiguity prompted Secretary Powell to call the Pakistani leader on June 24 to clarify that the "ending of infiltration across the Line of Control would be permanent." The State Department duly publicized Musharraf's reassurance. Yet, as Indian and Pakistani skeptics noted privately, Pakistan's intelligence services may support militants already in Kashmir, as well as infiltrate terrorists into India through Nepal and Bangladesh, and Musharraf had made no commitments on this score.

The pattern is familiar. When I interviewed Musharraf in late February, he told me essentially what he told Weymouth. I suggested that some people thought Pakistan might wish to trade its support in the war against al Qaeda for a *carte blanche* to fight Indians in Kashmir. He nodded, but gave the right answer, namely, that his government was implementing his January 12 pledge not to allow any organization "to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir" and to take "strict action . . . against any Pakistani individual, group, or organization found involved in terrorism within or outside the country." Musharraf added, however, "The issue does not end when people stop crossing the border. What worries me is that what we are trying to do in Kashmir is to address it and resolve it. If we don't resolve it, any unilateral action by us will not hold the ground in the future."

I suggested that this could be interpreted as a threat—if Kashmir is not resolved, Pakistan will open the sluice gates. "It's not a threat," Musharraf said matter-of-factly. "The people we are controlling now will keep getting weaker if we move toward a peaceful resolution with India. They are resisting me now—saying I am selling out Kashmir. They will get stronger if we don't resolve it. It's not a threat, but it's a reality."

In other words, when Musharraf pledges a permanent end to infiltrations, he means "permanent for now—permanent unless India does not negotiate forthcomingly with me on Kashmir." To Musharraf such thinking is not self-contradictory. What matter are his intentions, and his intentions are always good, if only others would do what he wishes.

George Perkovich is senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author of India's Nuclear Bomb.

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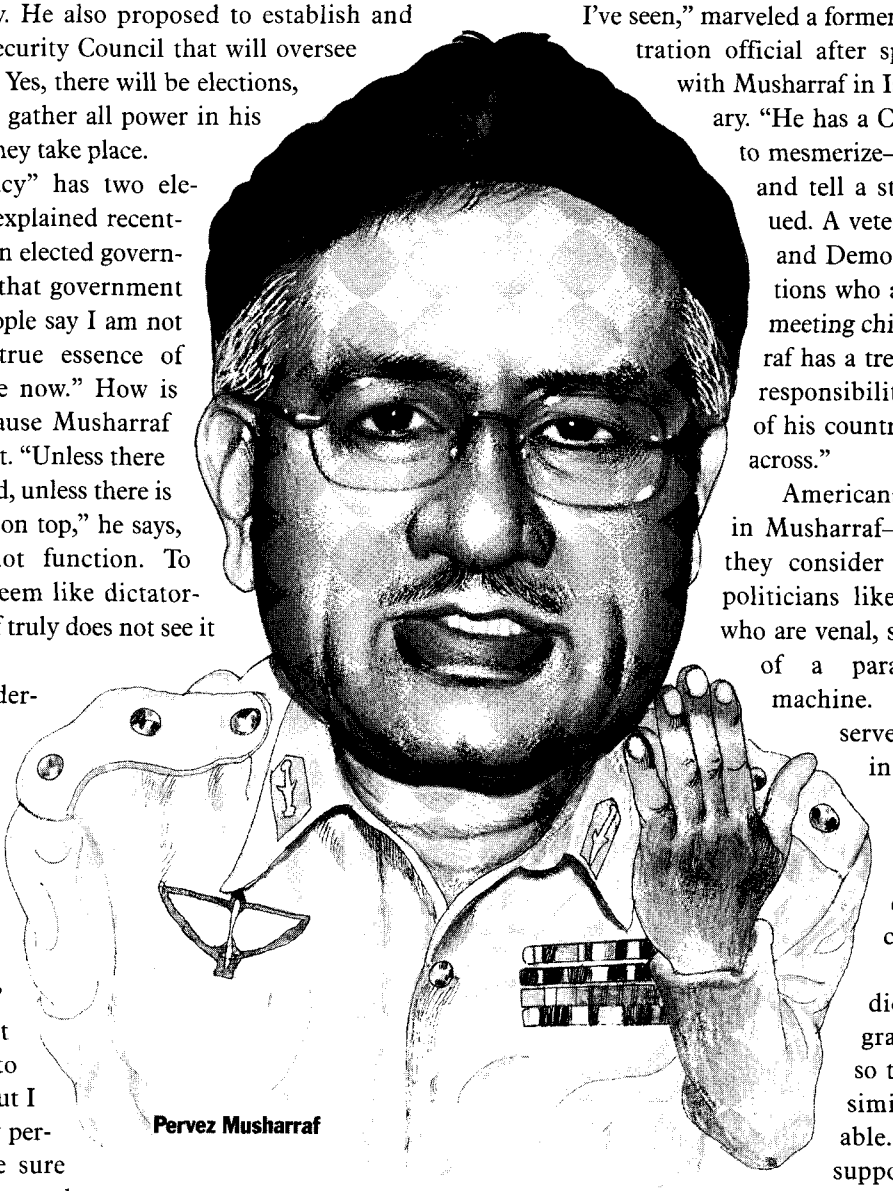
Musharraf thinks the same way about democracy in Pakistan. "I am for democracy," he told me. "I am not a dictator. I don't want a dictatorship." To sharpen the point, he insisted that elections for parliament would be held in October as the Supreme Court had ordered. Yet, on June 27, he proposed to amend the constitution to give himself the power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and to dissolve the elected National Assembly. He also proposed to establish and chair a National Security Council that will oversee the prime minister. Yes, there will be elections, but Musharraf will gather all power in his own hands before they take place.

"True democracy" has two elements, Musharraf explained recently. "One is having an elected government. Two is how that government functions. . . . People say I am not elected, but the true essence of democracy is there now." How is that so? Well, because Musharraf feels he's a democrat. "Unless there is unity of command, unless there is one man in charge on top," he says, democracy will not function. To many this might seem like dictatorship, but Musharraf truly does not see it that way.

The key to understanding Pervez Musharraf is this: He is so sure of his own good will and altruism that he fails to see how others could doubt him. "I know it sounds arrogant," he told me. "It sounds arrogant to me when I say it. But I think I am the only person who can make sure that true democracy takes root and is allowed to function without being pulled down."



Pervez Musharraf

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Even amid the double talk, Musharraf comes across as genuine and direct. He answers the question he is asked—he doesn't hit a button and play a pre-recorded message. He sits upright in his chair, calm, exuding both patience and energy. He speaks without blandishment or attempts at seductive eloquence, in short sentences made of simple words. He's not known to be corrupt, unlike every other leading politician in Pakistan. Nor is there anything "fundo" about him—he wears golf shirts at home and believes in women's rights. His brother was a Rhodes scholar and lives in Rome. His son is an actuary in Boston. Biographies of John Adams and Kemal Ataturk sit on a table outside his office.

"He would be right up there with all the world leaders I've seen," marveled a former Clinton administration official after spending an hour with Musharraf in Islamabad in January. "He has a Clinton-like ability to mesmerize—to speak directly and tell a story," she continued. A veteran of Republican and Democratic administrations who attended the same meeting chimed in: "Musharraf has a tremendous sense of responsibility for the welfare of his country. It really comes across."

Americans want to believe in Musharraf—especially when they consider the alternatives, politicians like Benazir Bhutto who are venal, self-serving bosses of a parasitic patronage machine. Musharraf deservedly ranks higher in polls than Benazir or the exiled Nawaz Sharif or any other single politician.

Yet the contradictions are so grave and Pakistan so troubled that pessimism is unavoidable. The country is supposed to be a democracy already. While most Pakistanis are too tired, poor, and uneducated to campaign for political reform, expectations of democracy are still high enough that the country will remain politically unstable and economically precarious without it. As long as the military retains control over the political economy, Pakistani society will not mobilize itself to manage internal conflict and pursue development. Politicians will strive for despotic power to keep

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the army at bay whenever they get the chance, as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif did prior to Musharraf's coup in October 1999.

For all his good intentions, the president has done little in the three years since he suspended democracy to prepare people and institutions to receive power from the army. Efforts to devolve authority to new local leaders seem promising but will not be sustained without cooperation from the major parties, which have been purposely excluded from the process. The constitutional amendments Musharraf has just proposed would mandate some useful reforms of political parties, but they would leave power more concentrated in the military than ever. Were this not so, he would resign his post as army chief of staff and retain only the civilian post of president. That he does not do this suggests that even Musharraf fears the army's tendency to dominate civilian government.

A product of the army, Musharraf has offered no vision for pulling it back from the commanding heights of the political economy. His hero Ataturk once said, "A nation must be strong in spirit, knowledge, science and morals. Military strength comes last. . . . Today it is not enough to have arms in hand in order to take one's place in the world." For fifty years, as American officials watched warily, the Pakistani army has prevented the transfer of resources and authority that would make the development of knowledge, science, and civil society the highest national priority.

Musharraf can't imagine anyone else's doing a better job than he. Yet, good leaders make themselves dispensable by creating systems or policies with enough public support to outlive them. By failing to separate the functions of the president from those of the army chief, and failing to give the prospective prime minister a source of power independent of the president/army chief, Musharraf ensures that chaos and conflict will follow his departure from power. Indeed, Musharraf's proposed constitution makes no provision for elected representatives *ever* to wield real power. This

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destroys Musharraf's credibility in urging political parties to reform: He's the agent of an army that will never subordinate itself to civilians, so what's the use?

With a kind of innocence, Musharraf seems to think that in time he can persuade everyone to like him, or at least to see the wisdom of following his lead. In January, he recounted how he had recently addressed a gathering of religious leaders. Quoting the Koran and other teachings, he had argued: "Jihad does not mean you are fighting like a madman around the world. I told extremists that 'you have converted more people to being non-Muslims than you have converted to Islam.'" As if in youthful excitement at a new discovery, he continued, "I told these mullahs that 'we must not divide Pakistanis into those who are religious and those who are progressive. We are all religious *and* progressive. We are all religious because we love our religion, and we are all progressive because we want Pakistan to make progress.'" Leaning back in his chair, he concluded with quiet confidence, "I am reasonably sure many of these religious leaders are with me now."

Musharraf's interior minister, Lieutenant General Moinuddin Haider (ret.), takes a different, perhaps more strategic approach. A big, round-faced man, Haider has no illusions about being liked or reaching accommodation with extremists. "From my dealings with these people," Haider said firmly, "I learned that you cannot have a dialogue with a mullah. They are not rational, do not follow logic or reasoning." Last December extremists murdered Haider's brother to intimidate the interior ministry from cracking down on them. This only hardened Haider's resolve.

"I was the sole voice initially," Haider continued, "saying, 'Mr. President, your economic plan will not work, people will not invest, if you don't get rid of extremists.'" According to Haider, back then, in early 2000, Musharraf worried that the extremists would take to the streets if he moved against them. Therefore the government had to proceed slowly. Indeed, Haider said, "people don't know that my toughest battle was on the inside," persuading Musharraf, the Inter-Services Intelligence, and the cabinet to follow a tough line. September 11 finally forced Musharraf to do what Haider had been urging for two years. As Haider had predicted, the protest was small and dwindled rapidly. "Eighty-five percent of the people believe in moderate Islam," he said. "Only fifteen percent believe in extremist Islam." So, too, on Kashmir, Haider believes that "the people will accept whatever decision the president makes through give and take with India."

To be sure, Haider does not face the challenge of reconciling the range of interests that Musharraf must as head of state. If Haider were president, his temperament and leadership style would provide more grounds to fear dictatorship than Musharraf's. But that is the point: Musharraf is too good a person, too desirous of popularity, and too politically awkward to sustain a dictatorship. Yet, dictatorship is what his proposed constitution would create, however noble the dictator and his chosen associates. The alternative—a transition to democracy—does not suit Musharraf's reluctance to empower others who may not agree fully with him. Nor does it serve the army's desire to retain the power and resources it has controlled for decades.

Musharraf will be a man of peace if India engages him diplomatically, for that is a role in which he fancies himself. Yet his conviction that he is indispensable prevents him from building the progressive Islamic welfare state he seeks.

Ultimately, as long as Pakistan's government hinges on the character of its army chief, the country's future will remain doubtful. Musharraf is not the monster many Indians take him for. He will be a man of peace if India engages him diplomatically, for that is a role in which he fancies himself. Yet his conviction that he is indispensable prevents him from developing the diverse coalition necessary to build the progressive Islamic welfare state he seeks. By making himself the object of all attention, Musharraf diverts pressure for reform from both the political parties and the army. He may be that rarity, a selfless dictator, but Pakistan needs something more.

The United States, if it is to be a friend to Pakistan, must recognize Musharraf's vulnerabilities. He is a good man, and if he could stay good forever, and persuade his restive population to follow his lead forever, it might be plausible to base U.S. policy on him. But Pakistan, like all countries, ultimately needs the rule of law, not of one man. Instead, Washington must stress the urgency of preparing civil society and the army for the transfer of power to publicly accountable institutions. U.S. policy must also make plain that neither Pakistan nor India is going to acquire parts of Kashmir it does not already hold—and that the sooner they both accept that fact the better off they'll be. Finally, Washington should cultivate reformers within Pakistan's political parties—who can share the burdens Musharraf now carries and help Pakistan stay on the difficult road to democracy. ♦

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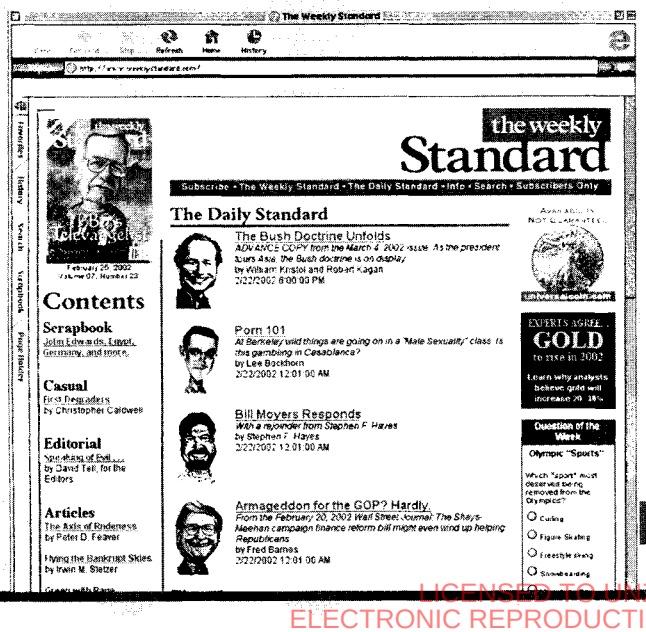

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Little Modern Women

Louisa May Alcott's unrecognizable heroines

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

Of all the benighted customs of the past, none is viewed with more condescension in these enlightened days than the practice of purging offensive passages from literary classics. We get the word "bowdlerize" from the English physician Thomas Bowdler, whose 1818 edition of Shakespeare omitted "those words and expressions . . . which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family."

Yet the truth is that we have developed our own ways of pushing out of sight and out of mind messages in old works that don't comport with our comfortable assumptions. Hollywood's handling of *Little Women* is a case in point.

Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel about the March sisters remains a favorite with serious young readers, but a far wider audience knows it only through a succession of movies. And all these cinematic retellings short-change Alcott. Where Bowdler merely left the racy bits out of his otherwise intact Shakespeare, the movies rip the heart out of Alcott's work—which is her moral message.

To appreciate the extent of the revision, it is necessary to see the central place Alcott gave to explicitly Christian ethics. For *Little Women* is constructed almost as a commentary on the most famous and influential evangelical literary work ever written in English, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Jean Bethke Elshtain is the author of Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy.

Open a copy of *Little Women* and right after the title page you will find (unless yours is one of the current editions that omits it) Alcott's "Preface," twelve lines of verse. They state that the purpose of her book is to inspire its readers to be Pilgrims, that they may *prize / The world which is to come, and so be wise; / For little tripping maids may follow God / Along the ways which saintly feet have trod.* And these verses, it says, are "Adapted from John Bunyan."

Bunyan's classic similarly begins with an "Author's Apology for his Book," a statement of purpose in verse. First published in 1678, *The Pilgrim's Progress From This World To That Which Is To Come* was an immediate success and remained hugely popular for two centuries, shaping the sensibilities and moral formation of generations of Protestant boys and girls in Britain and America. The work of an English tinker and lay preacher who was imprisoned more than twelve years for his nonconformist preaching, it is a powerful religious allegory and potent tale of spiritual heroism, alive with vivid imagery and written in a quaint and colorful style.

Through the story, the reader suffers the travails of the protagonist, Christian, as he journeys from his birthplace, the City of Destruction, to the Celestial City. Along the way, he nearly sinks in the Slough of Despond, weighed down by the Burden on his back; he resists the blandishments of Mr. Worldly Wiseman; finds his way to the Cross, where he sheds his Burden of sin; rests at House Beautiful, which is guarded by two lions; goes through the Valley of Humiliation, where he meets the foul fiend Apollyon; gets arrested with his companion, Faithful, at Vanity Fair (for refusing to buy anything); watches Faithful, sentenced to be burned at the stake, carried up into heaven; is caught by the Giant Despair and locked in Doubting Castle; passes through the Delectable Mountains;

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and finally, with his new companion Hopeful, enters the Celestial City.

Bunyan's exciting story was part of the air Louisa May Alcott breathed. And it was part of the air her readers breathed. They would have needed no prompting to register the allusions to *Pilgrim's Progress* in such chapter headings as "Burdens," "Beth finds the Place Beautiful," "Amy's Valley of Humiliation," "Jo meets Apollyon," "Meg goes to Vanity Fair," "Little Faithful," and "Pleasant Meadows."

Even so, Alcott made her use of Bunyan explicit. In the first chapter of *Little Women*—entitled "Playing Pilgrims"—Mrs. March (whom the girls call "Marmee") reminds her daughters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, how as little girls they used to play a game they called "Pilgrim's Progress." "Nothing delighted you more," Marmee says, "than to have me tie my piece-bags on your backs for burdens, give you hats and sticks, and rolls of paper, and let you travel through the house from the cellar, which was the City of Destruction, up, up, to the house-top, where you had all the lovely things you could collect to make a Celestial City."

"What fun it was, especially going by the lions, fighting Apollyon, and passing through the Valley where the hobgoblins were," says Jo. The girls reminisce and confess their shortcomings, one after the other, and Marmee reminds them: "We are never too old for this, my dear, because it is a play we are playing all the time in one way or another. Our burdens are here, our road is before us, and the longing for goodness and happiness is the guide that leads us through many troubles and mistakes to the peace which is a true Celestial City. Now, my little pilgrims, suppose you begin again, not in play, but in earnest, and see how far on you can get before father comes home."

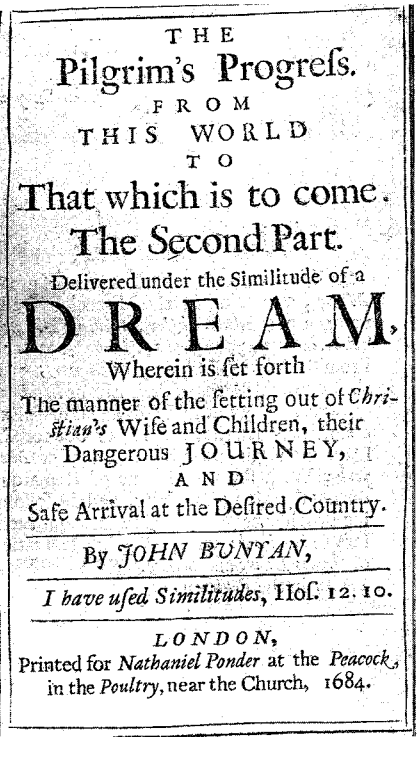
As Jo summarizes it: "We were in the Slough of Despond to-night, and mother came and pulled us out as Help did in the book. We ought to have our roll of directions, like Christian. What shall we do about that?"

The "roll of directions" to which Jo refers is the "Parchment Roll" that Bunyan's pilgrim carries. Given to him by Evangelist, this roll contains instructions for his journey. Where will the March girls find their instructions? Marmee tells them: "Look under your pillows, Christmas morning, and you will find your guidebook."

They do look, and what each girl finds is a small leatherbound book—one crimson, one green, one blue, and one dove-colored. The book is "that beautiful old story of the best life ever lived, and Jo felt that it was a true guidebook for any pilgrim going on a long journey." While this wording may mystify some modern readers, Alcott's contemporaries did not need it spelled out that the best life ever lived was that of Jesus, and the books that recount it are the four Gospels. What Marmee gives to her daughters as their life guide is the life of Christ.

Thus, by Chapter 2 the stage is set for a narrative that recounts not only the domestic adventures of four high-spirited sisters but also the everyday moral education of a Christian household. The girls will refer to their "little books," directly and indirectly, throughout the story. Alcott suggests that, in doing her duty, each of the March girls becomes her best self, though each sees her way toward the twin goals of goodness and happiness differently. Chapter 4, "Burdens," opens with Meg's lament: "Oh dear, how hard it does seem to take up our packs and go on." The doomed Beth, whose early death is the novel's unfolding tragedy, remarks to Jo (in Chapter 5, "Being Neighborly"), "I was thinking about our 'Pilgrim's Progress,' . . . How we got out of the Slough and through the Wicket Gate by resolving to be good, and up the steep hill, by trying; and that maybe the house over there, full of splendid things, is going to be our Palace Beautiful."

The house in question is the magnificent Laurence mansion next door, heretofore closed to the March girls, but shimmering with possibility since the arrival of fearful Mr. Laurence's attractive grandson Laurie. Whereas Bunyan's allegory always gestures to something beyond itself, *Little Women* brings the quest down to earth, as the rich neighbor's mansion becomes Palace Beautiful. Beth yearns for access



THE
Pilgrim's Progreſs.
FROM
THIS WORLD
TO
That which is to come.
The Second Part.
Delivered under the Similitude of a
DREAM,
Wherein is ſet forth
The manner of the ſetting out of *Chriſtian's* Wife and Children, their Dangerous JOURNEY,
AND
Safe Arrival at the Deſired Country.
By *JOHN BUNYAN*,
I have uſed Similitudes, Hoſ. 12. 10.
LONDON,
Printed for *Nathaniel Ponder* at the *Peacock*, in the *Poultry*, near the Church, 1684.

This page and previous: CORBIS.

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All movie stills: The Everett Collection.

Little Women: *in 1933 with Katharine Hepburn as Jo, in 1949 with June Allyson, and in 1994 with Winona Ryder.*

partly because of the house's fine piano, but she is afraid of Mr. Laurence. Unlike the courageous Jo, Beth finds it "very hard to get pass the lions."

If one obstacle is old Mr. Laurence, another is the March family's poverty, which makes the girls "shy of accepting favors which they could not return." Other challenges are inward. In Chapter 8, "Jo Meets Apollyon," the monster is no longer Bunyan's Destroyer (much less the beastly angel of the bottomless pit from the Book of Revelation), but Jo's hot temper, which helps her to attain mastery over others but also dominates Jo herself. Jo wails to Marmee, "Oh mother! what shall I do?"

Marmee tells her to watch, to pray, never to tire of trying, and never to think the task impossible. Jo reads her little book, resolves not to let the sun set on her anger, and goes to apologize to the one she has hurt. Chapter 9 finds Meg in Vanity Fair, spending a fortnight with some frivolous, worldly friends who frizz her hair and give her champagne to drink. Needless to say, she rues the visit nearly as soon as she has tarried.

Louisa Alcott picked up her love of Bunyan from her redoubtable, eccentric father Bronson Alcott, a philosopher, educator, and friend of the Transcendentalists. It is unsurprising, then, that her fictional March sisters should be taught to think of themselves as pilgrims. But they are only "playing" pilgrims. Bunyan's bracing allegory of salvation by faith in Christ has been domesticated. The one truly Bunyanesque pilgrim in the March family, Beth, is the least adventurous and is made to die young—in a death scene loaded with references to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Jo, more complex and boyish, yearns to leave home, to write, and to do many shocking things, but is enfolded back into domesticity at the end of the book when she marries and takes up what we might now call progressive education (another enthusiasm of Bronson Alcott's). With her husband, Jo founds "a good, happy, home-like school" that will use "the Socratic method of education on modern youth."

If Alcott somewhat domesticates Bunyan, Hollywood handles him in the three film versions of *Little Women*, made in 1933, 1949, and 1994, by simply dropping the pilgrimage theme. The sole reference to Bunyan in any of the movies pops up in the earliest of them, directed by the great George Cukor and starring Katharine Hepburn as Jo. In an opening scene that is close to the spirit of Alcott's first chapter, each of the March sisters recites her weaknesses (in a tight close-up shot), as Marmee reminds the girls of their Pilgrim's Progress game, adding, "You have real burdens now."

A bit of melodramatic and overdrawn moralizing creeps into the scene, but the prayers and invocations seem heartfelt enough. Later, we see Jo and Meg bargaining with God not to take "Bethie," or at least not to take her too soon.

At one point, the hymn "Abide with Me" is sung. When Meg and Mr. Brooke marry, their vows are solemnized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," with "life everlasting" beckoning down the road. Ordinary Christian piety has not been excised altogether.

By 1949, the fifteen-year-old Jo is played by the much-too-old June Allyson, who romps and bellows her way through the story, shouting "Christopher Columbus!" and "Oh, bilge!" at every turn. (To be sure, these deliberately Dickensian turns of phrase belong to Jo in the book—which contains in Chapter 10 references to the enormous popularity of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*—but they grate in the film because so much of the text's Dickensian texture is missing.) Jo is appropriately mannish—"I'm the man of the family now Pop is away"—but inappropriately garish. In fact, she is a quintessential tomboy, a way of being female that did not become commonplace in America until the mid-twentieth century.

June Allyson's Jo rails against the stiff formalities of society. Jo vows she will "never marry." But she does. When she finally starts writing about the familiar—her family and the "simple beautiful things I know and understand"—she gains not only a career but a spouse in the learned émigré, Professor Bhaer. The old world bends its knee to the new. Bhaer is an experienced, mature man, not a headstrong romantic youth like Laurie, compared with whom Jo is a tough-minded realist. God is conspicuous by His absence throughout.

By 1994, with a female director, Gillian Armstrong, *Little Women* has acquired a feminist gloss. The characters are not so much developed as hinted at. Marmee (played by Susan Sarandon) carries the ideological burden, proclaiming the need for young girls to

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have physical exercise, to engage the world, to chafe against convention, to stop injustice, and so on. Such themes are present in Alcott—who was, after all, Bronson Alcott's daughter—but in the Armstrong movie they dominate the narrative.

Marmee says vaguely spiritual things. She tells Jo (Winona Ryder), for example, to go forth and "embrace your liberty," a piece of pop-sentimentality that Alcott would have found unintelligible. Jo is more winsome and fragile in appearance, and far less tomboyish, than her predecessors; she does less galumphing and leaping over fences, and utters many fewer Christopher Columbus's, than in 1933 or 1949. Jo's ardor about writing is laced with feminine finesse. When her novel—*Little Women* in this version, rather than *My Beth*, as in Alcott and the other films—is complete, Jo ties it with twine, then tucks a long-stemmed flower under the string.

A single, vague Bunyan allusion survives in the 1994 script, when Jo tells Laurie she wants to fight "the lions of injustice." But Bunyan's metaphysical lions—the temptations that would turn a pilgrim away from the path of faith—are reduced to practical obstacles, to social conditions blocking the road to earthly justice. God gets two nods—one a mordant comment by Beth that she will die if God, presumably cruel and capricious, wants her to, as "nothing will stop Him"; the other the girls' father's greeting to the faithful cook and housekeeper, "God bless you, Hannah," when he comes home wounded from the Civil War.

The 1994 film is altogether innocent of any Puritan notion of duty or self-denial. The March girls' lives, far from being a Christian pilgrimage, are a search for happiness and identity stripped of faithfulness to any person save self and any group save family. Society is primarily a repressive force, stuffy and stultifying, in part because it encourages vain matches for money rather than marrying for love.

One could argue, of course, that the director had no choice. As America enters the twenty-first century, the Bunyanesque framework of Alcott's book has ceased to have meaning for the general audience. It simply could not survive the decay of cultural literacy and the entertainment agenda of the Hollywood dream factory. A modern film version of *Little Women* can bear only a thin, sentimental resemblance to Alcott's classic. Lacking memory of either the text or the sensibility of *Pilgrim's Progress*, we are by now so thoroughly separated from Alcott's literary and religious heritage that few can speak her language any more. No bowdlerizer is needed. The moral dimension of *Little Women*, far from being purged as offensive, is simply ignored—discounted, as if it weren't there or were only incidental. ♦

Coulter's Complaint

An angry white female takes on the left.

BY BETH HENARY

While on a tour of Monticello as vice president, Al Gore examined busts of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin and asked the curator, "Who are these people?" A single newspaper reported Gore's embarrassing ignorance. Meanwhile when presidential candidate George W. Bush was unable to name the leaders of four nations in a reporter's pop quiz, it was a topic of media concern for weeks.

Crown

Slander
Liberal Lies About the American Right
by Ann Coulter
Crown, 256 pp., $25.95

Ann Coulter's latest book, *Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right*, is rich with delightfully revealing comparisons like this one, compiled to expose the liberal media's double standard when it comes to matters of left and right.

Following in the wake of Bernard Goldberg's bestselling *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*—and broadening its scope to include the *New York Times*, Democrats, and liberals generally—*Slander* studies how the American left undermines the seriousness of our political debates.

Political discourse just isn't what it used to be. To make their case for constitutional ratification in the late 1700s, the Federalists wrote the series of newspaper columns that became the *Federalist Papers*. Compare that with the *New York Times* op-ed—cited by Coulter—that Democrat strategists James Carville and Paul Begala penned soon after Senator James Jeffords abandoned the Republican party last May.

After saying that Jeffords "spoke powerful truths about the truly radical nature of what President Bush is trying to achieve," Carville and Begala urged Democrats to call Bush a "radical." If it meant saving children from being poisoned by arsenic and the nation from having "an emasculated national government" (courtesy of the Bush tax cut) for years to come, Democrats should "obstruct" the president's legislation. Bush's initiatives were, in a word, "dangerous."

Besides name-calling—"radical," "Nazi," "homophobe"—dismissing conservatives and Republicans as "stu-

Beth Henary is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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pid" is a favorite liberal method of attack. "Stupid," Coulter points out, "is a fine word, but not for twenty-five Republican presidential candidates in a row." The slight of course has been directed at George W. Bush, but it was also used against Ronald Reagan and suggested of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

While they malign "dumb" conservatives, liberal media excuse Democrats' poor showing with voters. During the 2000 campaign Al Gore was "too smart for [his] own good" (as the *Los Angeles Times* explained), a man impatient "with those a few IQ points short of genius" (as the Bloomberg news service insisted). This praise seems excessive for a man who had bungled the national motto, misquoted the Bible, and called a song written when he was twenty-seven a childhood lullaby.

"If liberals were prevented from ever again calling Republicans dumb, they would be robbed of half their arguments," Coulter writes. "The 'you're stupid' riposte is part of the larger liberal tactic of refusing to engage ideas." Liberals fear such engagement, she believes, because they "have been wrong about everything in the last half century."

As another strategy for avoiding real argument, liberals have over the years invented an imaginary foe, the Religious Right. To label people as being from the Religious Right is to immediately mark them extremists. But as Coulter lays out in an especially impressive chapter, "Shadowboxing the Apocryphal 'Religious Right,'" this amorphous movement doesn't exist. First, she argues, for being a supposed political behemoth, the Religious Right is, effectively, leaderless. Of the four frequently named "Religious Right" leaders—Jerry Falwell, Gary Bauer, Pat Robertson, Pat Buchanan—three have made separate runs for the presidency. In years they haven't run, they have often supported different candidates. Another reason to question the status of the Religious Right as a movement is that many of those who are Christian and conservative, criteria that seem to grant provisional membership in the "movement," deny being part of it.

Liberal snobbery, which despises conservatives who let moral beliefs slip into their politics, is clearly seen in the popular vilification of Eagle Forum founder Phyllis Schlafly. Paying a long-overdue tribute to Schlafly, Coulter measures her accomplishments side by side with those of leftist darling Gloria Steinem to show why liberals are wrong to hold up Steinem—a "deeply ridiculous individual who succeeded as a journalist only by becoming the news"—as a heroine. Author of at least ten books, all of them serious, holder of two graduate degrees, and leader of a major political movement in the 1970s, Schlafly exemplifies female achievement in twentieth-century America.

Coulter defends her side well in *Slander*. What she doesn't do is advance the debate all that far. Liberal media bias and liberal politicians' hysteria-mongering about everything Republican are old news. They may well be what keeps our politics at the grade-school level. But books like *Slander* lift it only to junior high school.

Still, Coulter's work does serve as an important counterweight to such books as Michael Moore's recent anti-Bush screed, *Stupid White Men*. Conservatives can use a weapon like *Slander*, for it offers them innumerable examples of liberal gaffes to use as ammunition when liberals start slinging mud. ♦

Fred & Ginger

The romance of dance.

BY LEE BOCKHORN

The place of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers as *the* American dance couple, perhaps even *the* American romantic couple, seems secure. The very phrase "Fred and Ginger" still evokes a sense of elegance, glamour, and romance. Broadway is abuzz with news about *Never Gonna Dance*, an adaptation—set to open next season—of the 1936 Astaire-Rogers classic *Swing Time*. *Top Hat*, which usually vies with *Swing Time* for consideration as the pair's best film, is also rumored to be in line for a Broadway treatment. All ten of the duo's films are now available on video and sell quite well.

Astaire and Rogers
by Edward Gallafent
Columbia University Press, 256 pp., $24.95

Just as Fred and Ginger go on and on, so do attempts to explain their appeal. University of Warwick lecturer Edward Gallafent offers the latest such effort in *Astaire and Rogers*. One may wonder why Gallafent bothered, since by all accounts the definitive analysis of the Astaire-Rogers partnership has already been written. Arlene Croce, the respected choreographer and longtime dance critic for the *New Yorker*, published *The Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers Book* in 1972, and, as one critic recently noted, "It has become impossible to make any informed statement about those films without having consulted Croce's book: she set the standard for discussion." Her book is not only thoroughly informative about all aspects of the films, but full of snappy, witty prose that is almost as fun to read as watching Fred and Ginger dance.

But Gallafent believes that Croce—along with others, such as John Mueller in his encyclopedic *Astaire Dancing*—too readily dismisses the films themselves. For instance, when discussing Astaire and Rogers's unforgettable first romantic adagio dance, to

Lee Bockhorn is associate editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Cole Porter's classic "Night and Day," Croce declares that the rest of the film (*The Gay Divorcee*) "falls away in retrospect"; she also quips that *Roberta*, the pair's third film, "came as close to plotlessness as that ideal Astaire-Rogers musical we all like to think they should have made."

By largely dismissing the films' plots and preferring to focus on the dances (as well as the magnificent music and lyrics of Jerome Kern, Dorothy Fields, George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Irving Berlin), Croce and others have missed something crucial, in Gallafent's view. It does no good to consider the songs and dances apart from the films, he writes, because "the dance sequences answer questions raised elsewhere and raise other questions which it will be the business of the film to answer." Viewed both individually and as a series, the films "know what they are doing and do it intelligently."

It's hard not to sympathize with Gallafent's aims. Carried too far, an approach that overemphasizes the dances turns the films into something whose plots and comic moments we merely suffer through to get to the "good parts." And Gallafent does offer some intriguing insights. He is right to stress the importance of viewing the ten films as a (somewhat) coherent series, because this explains the increasing self-consciousness of the films as they progressed. In the pair's later movies, the well-established partnership of Astaire and Rogers placed new demands on the plots. It was no longer enough to show the two meeting (or reuniting after many years apart) and becoming a couple; everyone expected that. Thus the later films, sensing the imminent end of the partnership, increasingly stressed the passage of time and the possibility of negation, and began to create drama out of purposefully delaying or even denying the expectations of the couple's fans.

For example, in *Swing Time*, after Fred and Ginger's first spectacular dance, we spend twenty minutes waiting for them to overcome various obstacles so they can dance the "Waltz in Swing Time"; the line "There isn't going to be any dance" becomes a running motif in the film. In *Shall We Dance*, the couple teases the audience by walking Ginger's dog on board an ocean liner, striding in rhythm to George Gershwin's charming incidental music. You can see 1937 audiences squirming in their seats at this point, thinking, "If they'd just get rid of that silly dog, maybe they'd finally start dancing!"

Viewed in this light, "The Way You Look Tonight" in *Swing Time*—which, not coincidentally, Fred sings, but he and Ginger do not dance to—becomes, in Gallafent's assessment, "a pivotal moment in the cycle, the first explicit recognition, or imagining, of an ending. It celebrates the couple's achievement while recognizing it as both transient (because of their mortality) and enduring." Heard this way, Dorothy Fields's touching lyric has more meaning for us today—*Some day / When I'm awfully low, / and the world is cold, / I will feel a glow just thinking of you / and the way you look tonight*—because, as Gallafent notes, "Astaire's 'some day' is now, and the predicted glow, ours."

But occasional insights like this cannot redeem Gallafent's dreadfully earnest Film Studies prose. As academics are wont to do, he refers to his observations as his "readings" of particular scenes or films, and often these are excruciating and tortured. To cite just one of many examples, Gallafent makes a lame attempt to convince us that the screenwriters of *Shall We Dance* had Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* constantly on their minds. (Closer to the mark seems Croce's lament that, too often in the Astaire-Rogers films, "the two stars have somehow fallen among a gang of mental incompetents, and that includes the people behind the scenes writing the script.")

Despite Gallafent's best efforts to convince us otherwise, in comparison with the three exquisite minutes of "Night and Day," the rest of *The Gay Divorcee* really *does* fall away in retrospect. "In an Astaire-Rogers film," Croce writes, "the dancing is often the only real, the only serious business." This is not to deny that fully appreciating the dances requires acknowledging how they fit into the context of the films. But this is a far cry from claiming—as Gallafent too often does—that the films as a whole reach the same heights as those few precious minutes when Fred and Ginger are singing and dancing their way into each other's hearts, and into ours.

How Frederick Austerlitz of Nebraska and Virginia McMath of Texas became the greatest dance duo in movie history is a typical tale of

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This page and opposite: Columbia University Press.

Astaire and Rogers in Roberta *(1935). Opposite: The pair in* The Gay Divorcee *(1934).*

Hollywood serendipity. Astaire, already a vaudeville and Broadway star, decided in 1933 to try his luck in Hollywood. His sister and longtime dance partner, Adele, had retired from show business in 1932 to marry an English nobleman, and Astaire's first post-Adele show, *The Gay Divorce*, drew a lukewarm response. Despite the now infamous (and oft-misquoted) screen test report of RKO official Burt Grady ("Can't act. Slightly bald. Also dances."), RKO president David O. Selznick nabbed Astaire before leaving for MGM, and slotted him to appear in a big-budget musical called *Flying Down to Rio*.

Ginger Rogers, meanwhile, also a Broadway star, had left for Hollywood several years before Astaire, and had already appeared in nineteen films. She was cast in *Rio* as a last-minute replacement for Dorothy Jordan, who decided to go on her honeymoon with the film's producer, Merian Cooper. Rogers and Astaire had met on Broadway; while she was appearing in the Gershwin hit *Girl Crazy*, he was brought in to fix the choreography for Rogers and Allen Kearns in "Embraceable You." The two even dated casually during the brief period before Ginger left for Hollywood.

In *Flying Down to Rio*, the couple is fourth-billed, so it is not quite accurate to call it the first "Fred and Ginger" movie. But the few moments they spent on screen together—particularly, dancing in the film's extravagant production number, "The Carioca"—were enough to convince both the public and RKO executives that they wanted to see this couple together again. The budding partnership proved a godsend for the studio, which was on the brink of receivership; the pair's films almost singlehandedly kept RKO alive during the 1930s. Astaire's last Broadway show was reworked (and retitled *The Gay Divorcee*) in 1934 to create the first vehicle specifically for the new team. With the success of that film, more Astaire-Rogers movies followed in rapid succession: *Roberta* and *Top Hat* (both 1935), *Follow the Fleet* and *Swing Time* (both 1936), and *Shall We Dance* (1937).

After the box office numbers dipped for *Swing Time* and *Shall We Dance*, RKO finally relented to the pair's demands for a break from making "Fred and Ginger" movies. Contrary to rumors at the time, Astaire and Rogers enjoyed working together and were personally fond of one another. (Of course, they had the occasional squabbles inevitable in such a long-running partnership: After filming one of the dances in *Follow the Fleet*, Rogers told a reporter she wanted to take a vacation "digging mines." And Astaire could get testy too, as shown by the now legendary fit he threw over Rogers's ostrich-feather dress in the "Cheek to Cheek" dance in *Top Hat*.)

But despite their amicable relationship and the undeniable success of their films, both stars fretted about letting the series last too long. Astaire had suffered a career crisis when his sister retired, and henceforth was uneasy about becoming too closely identified with any particular female partner. Rogers wanted to break free from musical comedies and pursue more straight comic and dramatic roles. Though she managed to appear in ten other films for RKO during the Astaire-Rogers cycle, the time-consuming preparations for the dance numbers prevented her from competing for more non-musical parts.

So in 1937 the couple got their wish. Astaire made *A Damsel in Distress* with the twenty-year-old ice queen Joan Fontaine; the film was redeemed only by a wonderful Gershwin score and the comic presence of George Burns and Gracie Allen as co-stars. Meanwhile, Rogers made three films, including

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Stage Door, in which she more than held her own opposite RKO's other female star, Katharine Hepburn. Rogers had now firmly established herself as one of Hollywood's leading comediennes, and Astaire was nearing the end of his contract with RKO. The Fred and Ginger cycle ended with *Carefree* (1938) and the pair's final RKO film, *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle* (1939), a biopic about a famous pre-World War I era dance couple.

Those seeking to validate Rogers's contribution to the partnership (most memorably, Ann Richards at the 1988 Democratic convention) have often repeated an old witticism: "Sure Fred Astaire was great, but don't forget Ginger Rogers did everything he did—backwards and in high heels!" It's a clever line, but it's also absurd. Anyone with even a minimal knowledge of dance knows that Astaire was by far the more gifted dancer. His dancing style earned the effusive praise of everyone from Balanchine to Baryshnikov, and when combined with his vastly underrated singing, it made him one of the definitive artists of the twentieth century.

Many of Astaire's later partners—Eleanor Powell, Rita Hayworth, Cyd Charisse, and Leslie Caron, to name just four—were technically superior to Rogers as dancers. But recognizing this does not diminish Rogers's distinct value to Astaire; in fact, it enhances it. One of the joys of watching the RKO films in succession is witnessing her marked improvement as a dancer from one film to the next. But more important, it was her temperament—her "genial resistance," in Croce's formulation—that "brought out [Astaire's] toughness and also his true masculine gallantry," and thus made him a plausible romantic leading man.

In an era that also gave us Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, and Cary Grant, the short, toupeed, waifish Astaire, with his peninsular chin and tragic eyes, needed the help. Before teaming with Astaire, Rogers had mostly played wiseacre, sassy American girls. This persona, playfully resisting the advances of the dapper, insouciant Astaire, was what gave the pair's films their spark. Katharine Hepburn's famous aphorism explaining Fred and Ginger's unique compatibility—"He gives her class and she gives him sex [appeal]"—is often cited, but it's not quite accurate. As Croce observes, "The sexiest of [Astaire's] other partners, Rita Hayworth and Cyd Charisse, did very little for him. Sex unshaded by temperament isn't very interesting and, in relation to Astaire, it's useless." In his post-Ginger films, she notes, Astaire "never ceased to dance wonderfully and he has had some good dancing partners. But it is a world of sun without a moon."

Those who have written about the pair almost always mention the accessible intimacy that they created in their dances. Again, much of the credit for this belongs to Rogers. None of Astaire's other partners surpassed her ability to convey emotion simply by the way she looked at Astaire when they danced—or the post-coital glow she showed when they were done. Ginger also made evident the fun the couple had during their up-tempo numbers; listen, for example, to her audible, breathless giggles of delight during the friendly hijinks of *Roberta*'s "I'll Be Hard to Handle."

Fred Astaire was a notoriously modest man. He ended his 1959 autobiography, *Steps in Time*, by saying, "I have no desire to prove anything by [dance]. I have never used it as an outlet or as a means of expressing myself. I just dance." In a 1987 BBC documentary about the history of RKO, when pressed to acknowledge that his movies were high art, Astaire retorted, "We just wanted to make a buck." All this self-effacement was belied, of course, by Astaire's well-known perfectionism: the grueling rehearsal schedules, the endless takes, the relentless attention to detail. (Another of Rogers's virtues was that she put up with all this: Witness her willingness, as her feet were bleeding raw inside her shoes, to endure forty-eight takes of the climatic final sequence of "Never Gonna Dance" in *Swing Time*.)

"What I think is the really dangerous approach is the 'let's be artistic' attitude," Astaire wrote. "I know that artistry just happens. Believe it or not, there is even an artistic way to pick up a garbage can." (Or to get dressed to go out and look for your dream girl, as Fred does while singing "Needle in a Haystack" in *The Gay Divorcee*; or to roller-skate in Central Park, as the couple does in *Shall We Dance*.) As performers from early on in both their lives, Astaire and Rogers were, first and foremost, professionals, and it was

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their mutual dedication to performance as performance rather than as a vehicle for self-expression that, paradoxically, allowed the artistry of the songs and dances to shine through.

Though they both would have been loath to admit it, Rogers and Astaire saved each other's careers. Astaire probably wouldn't have lasted long in Hollywood had his first partner not complemented his virtues so well. And the dance films with Astaire transformed Rogers from a mere featured player into one of RKO's premier stars. In the 1940s she went on to make a series of popular working-girl fables, most notably *Kitty Foyle*, for which she won the Academy Award for Best Actress. Astaire's career, meanwhile, suffered something of a post-Ginger lull; his biggest success in the 1940s came alongside Judy Garland in *Easter Parade* (1948). MGM quickly planned another vehicle for the pair, *The Barkleys of Broadway*, but Garland fell ill and the studio called on Ginger Rogers to replace her, reuniting the old team after a decade for one last time. At the Academy Awards ceremony in 1950, Rogers presented Astaire with a special Oscar recognizing him "for his unique artistry and his contributions to the technique of musical pictures."

This page and opposite: Outerbridge & Lazard.

Above: Swing Time *(1936). Opposite: An RKO publicity photo of the pair.*

To watch these enchanting films nearly seven decades after their creation inevitably compels reflection upon the differences between that era and ours. What made such films both good and popular then—but nonexistent today?

The death of the musical motion picture must be counted as one of our worst losses. The form still pops up sheepishly here and there. Recent examples include the sensory overload of last year's *Moulin Rouge*; "Once More, With Feeling," the highly acclaimed musical episode from last season on the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; and Kenneth Branagh's widely panned song-and-dance adaptation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. The only movie musicals to have enjoyed any popular or critical success in recent years are cartoons: *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Little Mermaid*. Movies have become such an intensely naturalistic form that we seem to believe only a cartoon, not a flesh-and-blood person, is capable of expressing emotion through song or dance.

But the real reason we have nothing like the Astaire-Rogers films these days is our impoverished sense of romance. Freed from the restraints of the Hays Code and "liberated" by the sexual revolution, we don't need sublimation; we can take our sex straight—and the result is that movie sex has lost the romantic elements that made it interesting to watch in the first place.

Astaire detested mushy love scenes; Fred and Ginger did not even share their first legitimate on-screen kiss until their eighth film, *Carefree*. Even so, there is more real eroticism in their romantic dances than in the most titillating scene from any recent Hollywood skin flick. In all their variety and endless inventiveness, they offer a picture of love far more complete than what we see in movies today. When Fred and Ginger dance, we see erotic attraction and seduction, comic misunderstanding and heartbreak—together with trust, faith, and consideration.

But the ten Fred and Ginger films are something more than merely a marker by which Hollywood—and we—can measure our decline. They offer as well a way back: a path out of the sexual morass into which we have fallen. Ultimately, Fred and Ginger dance because they can't have premarital sex. The elegance and energy of their dancing derive directly from their submission to the old Hays Code conventions of courtship.

Indeed, they are more genuinely sexy than anything today precisely because their films submitted to that code. What Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers teach us is that to recover the sense of romance we find in their films, we also need to recover the old conventions that made those films possible. In the highly erotic space between the moment when a boy meets a girl and the moment the door closes on the honeymoon suite, there is room for a great romantic story—and a lot of great dancing. ♦

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After four days of hearings, the House Ethics Committee concluded July 18 that Rep. James Traficant should be expelled from the U.S. House of Representatives for ethics violations.
—News Item

Not a Parody

Highlights from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Standards of Official Conduct hearings IN THE MATTER OF REPRESENTATIVE JAMES A. TRAFICANT JR., July 15-18, 2002

DISCUSSING HIS BOAT

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN. No questions.

MR. TRAFICANT. Mr. Green, you never have a question. I am upset with you. All that money I helped you to get on transportation where those other people wouldn't help you, and you were too timid to go forward, and I got you millions, you chicken. You could have eaten up about 10 minutes of their time for me. I want to blow their time.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Traficant, if I might have your attention?

MR. TRAFICANT. I am sorry, Chairman. I got carried away in a "writ of fealous jage." I had two glasses of wine last night. I think I am still a little tipsy.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Traficant, I think you mentioned yesterday, but clarify it for me, we talked a lot about the farm, and Mrs. Tubbs Jones asked about the size of the farm. I was curious about that. I am also curious about the boat again. What brand and what size was the boat?

MR. TRAFICANT. It is a 1970 Wooden Egg Harbor aft cabin, fly bridge, motor yacht. It is old, but it was lovely inside, and I bought it from Senator Craig. And I thought it had some sentimental value, and I thought I could live in it cheaper than some apartment and have a little privacy. Then it got to the point where I couldn't afford to keep it at gangplank and moved it to Anacostia, where it is cheaper, only about $110 a month. I probably shouldn't have bought the boat. I should have just stayed in my office, but I just got tired of that, and I wanted to have Playboy bunnies come in and meet with me at nights, and I wanted to be promiscuous, so I did it.

THE CHAIRMAN. You do realize that is on the record, Mr. Traficant?

MR. TRAFICANT. What the hell. Everything else is. But I want you to know there were no Playboy bunnies there. I never hired a hooker, but some women did come looking for me, and I refused them, Chairman. The only woman I had there was my wife, and, quite frankly, she was fed up with the quarters. Both of the heads didn't work, and she didn't even want to stay there. The heads, by the way, are commodes. . . .

ON WHY HE WAS LATE TO THE HEARING

MR. TRAFICANT. I was on media broadcasts trying to demean you and the others.

QUESTIONING HIS FRIENDLY WITNESS, SANDRA FERRANTE

MR. TRAFICANT. Were you and I sex partners?

MS. FERRANTE. No.

MR. TRAFICANT. Why not?

Newscom / KRT

the weekly Standard
JULY 29, 2002

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Bush's Wall Street Reform Program Merits Support

Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

When a thief shoots and kills an innocent bystander or one Mafioso offs another Mafioso, the effect of such homicide is limited to the immediate family. But **when a corporate executive fiddles with the corporate books, millions of innocent people are affected**—people who were looking forward to retirement living on something better than Social Security.

Of course, there can be no guarantee of eternal profits and a forever bull market. You accept the stock market's verdict because you trust the numbers; you and your investment advisers trust the balance sheets, the income statement, and the listed assets. Millions of people go to Las Vegas every year even though the odds are against them because they half-trust the spinning roulette wheel or the blackjack dealer. Is it possible that the games in Vegas are more honest and more ethical than some of the stocks listed on the Big Board or the Nasdaq?

Working people and middle-class professionals have been encouraged to put their money in stocks and mutual funds so that one day they would enjoy the good life. According to the World Bank, more than 50 percent of Americans have invested in the stock market. Fareed Zakaria, in his book *From Wealth to Power,* says such investments have quadrupled in value in the last decade. In October 1999, the *Washington Post* ran a story about the stock market headlined "Investing's Changing Face: Women, Blacks, Hispanics and Others Are Reshaping Wall St." At that time nearly half of Americans were invested in the stock market, many of them between nineteen and thirty-five years old. Investing had become a mass movement in America. Will such participation continue?

There's no point in saying there will always be crooks and suckers. True, most of American business is run honestly; dishonest CEOs and swindling accountants amount to only a handful. Yet look at how this handful has contributed to a meltdown affecting jobs, investment returns, and portfolios. That is why President Bush's reform program deserves support by Congress.

At the end of World War I, John Maynard Keynes wrote in his masterwork, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace:* "There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency. The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose."

Today, when millions and millions of Americans are investing their life savings in bonds and equities, we might update Keynes: **There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the securities market.** The process engages all the hidden forces of economic law on the side of destruction and does so in such a conspiratorial manner that not one man in a million is able to diagnose what has happened until it is too late.

— Arnold Beichman

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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